DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 406 281 SO 027 098

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TITLE A Feeling for Clay: Japanese Pottery from Ancient to Pre-Modern Times. A Teacher Workshop on May 8, 1993. Teacher's Packet.
INSTITUTION Asian Art Museum of San Francisco, CA.
PUB DATE 93
NOTE 74p.; Slide set not available from EDRS.
AVAILABLE FROM Asian Art Museum, Golden Gate Park, San Francisco, CA 94114; phone: 415-379-8838 ($20 per slide set; $6 literary themes).
PUB TYPE Guides - Classroom Use - Teaching Guides (For Teacher) (052)

EDRS PRICE MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS *Art History; *Asian History; Foreign Countries; Higher Education; *Japanese Culture; Non Western Civilization; Secondary Education; Social Studies; Teaching Guides
IDENTIFIERS *Asian Art; *Japan

ABSTRACT

This packet accompanies a slide series designed to introduce students to the clay pottery works of Japan. The packet includes an essay introduction to the early influences on Japanese pottery, maps of the region, a time line of the chronology of Japan from 2000 B.C. to the present, illustrations of types of kilns, a 18-item bibliography for further research, the slide list, slide descriptions and slide script. (EH)

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TEACHER'S PACKET

ED 406 281

A FEELING FOR CLAY

JAPANESE POTTERY FROM ANCIENT TO PRE-MODERN TIMES

A TEACHER WORKSHOP ON MAY 8, 1993

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This teacher workshop and teacher resource packet
were made possible by grants
from The Gap Foundation ,
The Louise and Claude Rosenberg Family Foundation,
and the California Arts Council, a state agency.

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A FEELING FOR CLAY
JAPANESE POTTERY FROM ANCIENT TO PRE-MODERN TIMES

INTRODUCTION

Clay, the most common material available to artists everywhere, records the creative impulses of a culture through its transformation from earth to object. Because of the great durability of fired clay, pottery has provided the earliest records of human creativity often pointing to the particular aesthetic bias we will find throughout a country's history. Japan's ancient pottery is no exception, for it very early shows two distinct aesthetic traditions reflecting two major migrations into this island land. Jōmon pottery reflects the creative impulses of the early hunter-gatherer population which may be descendants of paleolithic peoples who walked to Japan during the late ice age when land bridges connected the islands to the Korean Peninsula in the south and to Siberia in the north. A second migration of people arrived by sea from south or central-eastern China by way of southern Korea around 300 B.C. These people, who brought with them a culture which included rice farming, metal tools, and raised buildings, produced pottery of a very different style.

JŌMON (ca. 10,000-250 B.C.)

The earliest residents of Japan probably migrated across land bridges which connected the islands to mainland Asia. Current evidence suggests that Japan has been inhabited for at least 30,000 years, most likely longer. Due to Japan's acidic soil, virtually no skeletons of these early people remain. As the climate gradually warmed, glaciers melted and sea levels began to rise, effectively cutting off Japan from its neighbors. By around 10,000 B.C. the nomadic hunter/fisher-gatherers were collecting in small communities, making buildings with round, slightly sunken floors, and creating pottery vessels for cooking, eating, and ceremonial purposes.

The earliest pots were simple, pointed-bottomed wares meant to be stuck into the fire pit for cooking. These evolved into tall

roughly cylindrical pots with flaring mouths and flat bottoms. This culture also made other vessel shapes including deep bowls, footed cups, small, intricately constructed ewers, and basket-like dishes with high handles. Especially in the middle and later Jōmon periods these pots were joined by numerous styles of human figurines. These earthenware pots and figurines were hand-made by coiling, kneading, pinching, rolling, cutting, and piercing techniques. The primary decoration on the majority of objects is an impressed cord (*jōmon* in Japanese) pattern for which the culture is named. Further embellishment was accomplished by the application of buttons and coils of clay, by incising, piercing, smoothing, and burnishing different areas. Firing was done in an open pit or bonfire, at first to temperatures of only 400°-500° C and later up to 700°-800° C. The coarse clay fired either a buff or reddish color depending on the region. Some people believe that Jōmon pottery was produced by women, as is the case in many contemporary indigenous cultures. In any case, the wares were probably made within individual families and fired in a community firing.

Jōmon pots demonstrate an interest in sculptural form and variously textured surfaces. These tendencies found their full expression in the marvelously flamboyant shapes and richly textured surfaces of the pots of the Middle Jōmon period. At this time many of the cylindrical jars exhibit widely flaring mouths decorated with sculptural tiers and projections of looped and draped coils of clay, which are in turn incised and pierced in richly creative designs (see slide 1). Sometimes the bodies of the vessels also become decoratively enriched with patterns of stripes and spirals made with thin coils of clay. These tactile, sculptural, unique pots are expressions of individual creativity and devoted labor made possible by a culture with leisure time. Scholars believe these elaborate pots were not meant for utilitarian purposes but served an emblematic or ceremonial function. The individualistic designs can be grouped into regional styles, perhaps representing clan or family identities.

Dogū, the small figurines of this period have been found in a variety of shapes, some flat and some fully three-dimensional. The most common type have large round heads, broad shoulders and hips,

and short little arms and legs. In the Late Jōmon period, most *dogū* have bulging, goggle-eyes and small noses and mouths (see slide 2). Cord patterns, raised and incised lines, similar to those on pots, decorate these small female figurines. Over 10,000 of these *dogū* have been found; most appear to have been purposely broken and discarded in pits, under stone slabs, or within isolated structures suggesting that they may have been used in fertility or healing ceremonies.

YAYOI (ca. 250 B.C.-A.D. 250)

The Jōmon period lasted a very long time, until about 300 B.C., when it appears a second migration of peoples brought a fully developed agricultural technology into the Japanese archipelago. The new Yayoi culture was already a complex mixture of south Chinese rice growing, northeast Chinese metalworking, and Korean cultures when it landed in Japan. Arriving first on the southern island of Kyushu, the rice growing Yayoi culture spread north into the rich fertile valleys of Honshu along the warm Inland Sea to the central plains which are now occupied by cities including Kyoto, Osaka, and Nara. From there it continued northeast to the Kanto plains around modern Tokyo and more gradually along the narrow band of lowlands on Honshu's northeastern coast. As the Jōmon and Yayoi cultures came into contact with each other the Jomon tended to retreat further north and into the mountains. At the same time, however, there are indications of intermarriage and peaceful integration of the two cultures, especially in the northern areas.

Yayoi pottery reflects different aesthetic, economic, and social concerns from that of the Jōmon. The clay body of this earthenware is composed of a fairly coarse, sandy, buff-colored clay (see slide 3). Sometimes it is covered with a darker, iron-bearing clay slip (fine clay mixed with water) which fires to a glowing brick red. The ware, although still hand built by the coil method, is finished on a simple turntable where it is elegantly formed by scraping and paddling and carefully smoothed. The most common shapes were urns with wide mouths, narrow necked jars called *tsubo*, plates, pedestalled stands, bowls, and long-necked bottles. Most pots taper to a very narrow

base. Surfaces show the faint traces of the tools used for paddling and scraping. Delicately incised geometric designs are scratched through the slip on the body of the vessel or sometimes on the crisply formed rims. Made on a slowly turning wheel, these horizontal bands of decor contrast visually and technically with the more vertical and sculptural hand-applied ornamentation found on the Jōmon pots.

The general aesthetic of the Yayoi pots is one of elegance, restraint, and orderliness, reflecting the more hierarchical and ritualistic nature of their society. The predominance of large-bodied storage jars with narrower necks and mouths show the need for storage containers for the quantities of grain harvested from the well-tended rice paddies. Some very large urns were used for burial and smaller ones as ossuaries for the exhumed and washed bones of the deceased. Round-bottomed jars and pedestal stands were used for seasonal offerings.

KOFUN (OLD TOMB) PERIOD (A.D. 258-646)

The following Kofun period is named for the large burial mounds or tumuli (*kofun* in Japanese) which begin to appear in the 3rd century. In the Early Tumulus era, these graves appear to be enlarged burials of a type consistent with the burials of the preceding Yayoi period. They contain metal and stone objects of an essentially symbolic, magical nature as well as ceramic dishes and jars with offerings. However, in the Late Tumulus era not only do the characteristically keyhole-shaped mounds become monumental in scale, they also begin to be furnished with greater quantities of the more practical materials of everyday life, particularly those that expressed the status and prestige of the deceased. By this time the outside of the tomb was embellished with rows of clay cylinders topped by lively representational sculpture, called *haniwa* (see slide 5), particularly around the circular back part of the tumulus, but also in rows along the front and sides. The predominance of clay horses and warriors and the artifacts inside the stone-lined crypts indicate that a new equestrian culture, which evolved in the northern part of

the Asian mainland had come to dominate Japan. As professor Namio Egami expresses it, "during the Late Tumulus era the peaceful, agricultural, magico-ritualistic, Southeast Asian qualities of the culture of the Yayoi period and the Early Tumulus era were replaced to a large extent by the very practical, warlike, king-and-noble-dominated North Asian qualities of the equestrian people" (p. 61). Horse trappings, sword handles, and the warrior costumes unearthed in Japan all show similarities to those found on the mainland. This new ruling class of warrior-nobles established itself on the Plains of Yamato as can be seen by the large number of monumental tombs in the area.

There are three types of pottery associated with the Kofun period. One type, called *haji* ware (see slide 4), continued many of the forms of the Yayoi, especially those smaller shapes for ritual offerings while adding new ones for everyday food service. Filling an increased demand for earthenware dishes, the potting guild or *hajibe*, established in the middle of the Kofun period, produced a less refined ware than that of the Yayoi potters.

Hajibe potters were also responsible for production of the *haniwa*, the low-fired clay cylinders sometimes ornamented with sculptures of figures, animals, birds, houses, and significant objects, which were placed around the outside of tomb mounds. Although these large cylinders of clay may have begun simply as stands for offering dishes, they soon became transformed into lively, spontaneously created sculptures which, like the tomb sculpture of China, record the life of the people of their time. Whereas in China demand for numerous clay figures at once, to furnish the tomb of an important person, was met by many mold made pieces, in Japan such demand was met by groups of potters creating marvelously free, simplified, somewhat abstract, hastily made images. One can easily retrace the steps of rolling out slabs of clay, bending them into shape, adding buttons, strips, and cut-out shapes to form details of costume, cutting out holes for the eyes and mouths, and pinching out or sticking on wedges of clay for the noses of the figures. Combed texture marks indicate clothing or armor. The features and costumes, although not rendered in fine detail, clearly indicate the types of figures, such as warriors, shamnesses, or farmers, and even suggest

different personalities. In their spontaneous way, *haniwa* exemplify the evocative nature of much of Japanese art.

A third type of ceramic of an entirely new sort was produced in Japan in the Kofun period. The earliest pieces of this gray, high-fired stoneware, imported from Korea, were found in one or two late 4th century tombs as unusual and rare treasures. By the 5th century the technology for this ware had entered Japan and large quantities were being produced. Their use and production rapidly spread from the southern island of Kyushu to the seats of power in the Yamato plains. Called *Sue* ware (from the word *sueru* meaning "to offer"), these stoneware vessels were primarily made for use in burial rites. Intact pieces, often containing traces of food offerings for the spirit of the deceased, have been found in the inner tomb chambers, while examples found in the entryways, where final rites were performed, appear to have been intentionally broken for purification. It is not uncommon to find hundreds of *Sue* pieces in one large tomb.

By the 5th century, the technology need to produce *Sue* ware had entered Japan and large quantities were being produced (see slides 6-8), at first by immigrant Korean potters working for the emerging ruling families on the Plains of Yamato. These potters brought with them the use of the fast-turning wheel for forming pots, tunnel kilns which could reach higher temperatures than open firings, and the technique of reduction (reduced oxygen) firing which produced dense gray wares. These gray stonewares were the first Japanese pots non-porous enough to store liquids successfully.

From the 5th to the 9th centuries, the greatest number of early *Sue* kilns were concentrated in an area south of Osaka called Suemura, where the remains of over 600 kilns have been excavated. It is in this region where the greatest number of monumental tomb mounds are found, and thus where there was the greatest demand for quantities of *Sue* ware. Also contributing to the importance of this particular area was the discovery there of large deposits of the finer, more refractory, feldspathic clays necessary for stoneware.

Soon Japanese potters were engaged in *Sue* ware production and the new technology spread rapidly throughout Western Japan wherever deposits of the proper clay were found. The earliest pots

were formed using both coil and wheel methods. Medium to large size pots were made by the coil method and finished on a fairly fast-turning wheel. Small pots were made directly on the wheel. It was not until the eighth century that larger lumps of clay were centered directly on the wheel and pots were thrown entirely on it. The use of the potter's wheel made it possible to produce more pots rapidly and to supply the ever increasing demand for ceramic wares.

The hand wheel that had been developed in China was the type that was imported at this time. It consisted of a wheel shaft stuck in the ground and a wheel head balance and centered on it quite close to ground level. It was propelled clockwise by a stick stuck in a hole near the rim of the wheel. Once the wheel has started spinning the weight of the wheelhead kept it going for a long time providing the potter with time to throw his pot. Later, the Korean-developed kickwheel was brought into Japan.

The earliest shapes of *Sue* ware were those used for rituals, including bowls, plates jars, and pedestalled stands. Soon the round-bottomed jar and the stand on which it was placed were joined together into single, tall, imposing pieces (see slide 6). In time, many new shapes evolved by combining and manipulating separately thrown forms. Vertically standing donut-shaped bottles with added mouth pieces, barrel shapes with holes in the sides for sipping from with a bamboo straw, and duck-shaped bottles made from folded wheel-thrown bowls (see slide 7) were some of the forms that show the inventiveness of the *Sue* potter.

Surfaces were decorated with horizontal lines or ridges and wavy combed lines created while the pot was turned on a wheel. Additionally, some large pedestalled pieces have small sculptural figures decorating the shoulder (see slide 6).

Although not intentionally glazed, some pieces have light coatings of accidental glaze where ashes blown from the fire landed on the shoulders or one side and fused with the red-hot clay body. Wood ashes contain the necessary ingredients for a glaze: alumina and silica for the substance and glass, potash, or soda for flux, and iron oxide (among other agents) which adds to the fluxing and is also the colorant.

Most significant and far reaching for future ceramic production in Japan was the introduction of the technology of kiln firing. The tunnel kiln, called an *anagama*, was dug into the gently sloping hillsides creating a more controlled environment for firing and the ability to reach much higher temperatures than the previously used pit or open fires (see Diagram A). The gray *Sue* wares were produced in reduction firings where the amount of oxygen in the kiln is reduced. Sometimes reduction is accomplished by the introduction of organic matter, perhaps wet vegetation, into the fuel, usually at the end of the firing process. It is also possible that reduction firing took place naturally in the early *anagama* kilns because of their construction. These early kilns were about 25 feet long, 3 feet deep, and 5 feet wide at their widest point, and their angle of inclination was about 20°-25°. The incomplete burning of the fuel due to the generally low inclination of the kiln would cause a smokey, reduction kiln atmosphere even without the addition of wet or green matter. This not only made the wares gray in color by changing the chemical composition of the iron in the clay but also made them denser by permeating the clay body with carbon.

Sue kilns fired to 1100°-1200° C. It was necessary that the clay used be able to withstand such heat without melting and warping. Thus one factor in the siting of a *Sue* kiln was the availability of deposits of non-alluvial refractory clays suitable for the high-firing process. Sometimes the clay was processed by washing to rid it of stones and organic debris. Stoneware pots made with this clay and fired at high temperatures have partially fused, non-porous bodies which ring with a metallic sound when struck.

All of these technologies transformed the look and feel of Japanese ceramics. Although earthenwares continued to be produced for cooking pots and ritual serving dishes for a very long time, high-fired wares dominate the ceramic production from this time on.

ASUKA, NARA, AND HEIAN PERIODS (552-1185)

The 6th century saw the rise of one family, the Sun line, among the ruling lineage groups in the Asuka area of the Central Plains of

Japan to a position of dominance . By mid century the Sun family had claimed imperial authority and descent from the sun goddess, Amaterasu Omikami. During this first imperial period, known as the Asuka period (552-710), there was an exchange of emissaries with Korea and China resulting in far-reaching cultural, political, and religious influence on Japanese society. Buddhism, which had been introduced by Korean envoys in 552, was officially adopted by Emperor Shotoku (573-621), who also instituted governmental reforms aimed at unifying the country by weakening the power of the provincial clans and strengthening the central, imperial authority.

The next two centuries saw the rapid rise of artistic expression stimulated by continental styles. Images, techniques, and styles came mostly from or through Korea in the 6th and 7th centuries, shifting in the 8th-9th centuries to direct contact with China. Architecture, sculpture and painting were produced for the Buddhist religion as many temples were being built to promote this new faith. The move of the capitol to Nara in 710 stimulated more trade and imports of Chinese goods and ideas. The city was modelled on Changan, the capitol of the Tang dynasty and grand wooden buildings on stone platforms and supporting tile roofs in the Chinese manner were built.

Because the power of the clergy in the huge temple complexes in Nara had become excessive by the later 8th century, the court established a new capitol, Heian Kyo "Peaceful Capitol," now known as Kyoto, in 794. During the Heian period (794-1185) contact with China, the importation of goods and ideas and the imitation of Chinese style in the arts, continued until the late 9th century when conditions in Japan and the disintegration of the Tang dynasty in China persuaded the Japanese government to close the ports and focus on internal affairs. A period of Japanization of the arts, the Fujiwara period (897-1185), followed, with the flowering of Japan's native genius for decorative style, intimate perspectives, and emotional expressiveness.

Ceramic wares of these first historical periods include the continuation of *Sue* (see slide 8) and *haji* wares along with newly introduced low-fire reduction tile ware ()and green or three-color lead glazed ware. Large tumulus burials were gradually abandoned during

this time and with them the production of *haniwa*. *Sue* and *haji* wares supplied ritual wares for both Shinto and Buddhist use as well as utilitarian pots and dishes for the imperial court and aristocracy.

Imported from Korea in the 6th century, green lead-glazed wares were used for important ceremonial purposes at court and in the temples; such wares were produced in Japan from the 7th through the 12th century. On the other hand, production of three-color lead-glazed wares (*sancai*), originally imported from Tang China, was confined to the 8th century. It is now believed that the continuation of the single color, green-glazed wares was stimulated by the importation of Chinese celadon (*Yue*) wares which the potters were emulating with the only glaze they knew how to make at that time. The new shapes they were imitating included ribbed incense burners, long-necked bottles, ewers, dishes, bowls and jars with four handles on the shoulder.

In Japan, lead-glazed wares were fired twice, in an unglazed and then glazed firing. Wares were first fired without glaze at a low, earthenware temperature or a higher stoneware one. Due to differences in the clay body, the firing temperature, and the atmosphere of the kilns, the bodies range from a light buff to a reddish or gray color. Then the piece was glazed and re-fired to 750-800 ° C.

Sue wares from Suemura were gradually phased out in favor of those from the *Sue* kilns established further north in Aichi Prefecture, near Mt. Sanage. Sue kilns in this area date back to the 5th century but became a major production center after the late 6th century. Fine *Sue* wares made in this area have been found at many sites in central and eastern Honshu (see slide 8), but it was imperial patronage that gave the greatest support to the kilns. The imperial court gave orders to the Sanage kilns to try to copy the Chinese celadons which the lead-glazed wares only superficially reproduced. Perhaps it was this impetus that caused the Japanese potters to recognize the potential in the natural ash glazes that were being created in the *sue* kilns. By the late 8th century the Sanage potters were producing a proto-ash glaze in shorter, steeper kilns which were about 3 feet wide, 25 feet long, and inclined about 30°-40°. A new kind of fire pit was constructed at the mouth of the kiln which could hold more fuel for a hotter firing,

and the steeper kiln had a stronger draft. These changes in construction pulled more oxygen into the kiln to produce moderately oxidized firings. At the same time a finer clay which contained less iron was discovered and was refined further by washing. With this lighter clay and less reduction the Sanage pots were a soft buff color which showed off the pale green (moderately reduced) natural ash glaze.

The creation of an intentional glaze was the next step in ceramic development and was achieved by the late 9th century. Sieved plant ash with other minerals sometimes added, was dusted on pots or mixed with water and brushed or poured onto and into the pots to produce a more evenly distributed but still very thin and glassy glaze (see slide 9). A 10th century modification to the kilns, a pillar called the "fire-dividing pillar" constructed between the fire pit and the kiln chamber, blocked the flames from coming into direct contact with the pots and distributed the heat more evenly throughout the kiln chamber. The intentionally glazed ware, which was called *shirashi* or "white ware" because of its light body, was covered with a fairly even, transparent pale green glaze. Although first ordered by the imperial court in Western Japan, these native glazed wares were particularly popular in Eastern Japan where imported Chinese celadons were less available. They recreated many of the important shapes inspired by Chinese ceramics, by clay or metal Buddhist ritual vessels, or by earlier *Sue* pieces. Popular shapes included incense burners, covered boxes, three-legged bowls, four-legged jars, and horizontal jars with off-center mouths (see slide 9).

MEDIEVAL KILNS
KAMAKURA PERIOD through MUROMACHI PERIOD (1185-1573)

The political turmoil in the mid 12th century, which eventually saw the end of imperial rule and a shift in power to the military lords of the Eastern provinces, dramatically affected the course of ceramic production in Japan. The kilns at Sanage lost patronage and produced fewer and fewer varieties of pots, eventually ending production of glazed wares entirely and producing only the simple stoneware dishes

known as *yamachawan*, or "mountain bowls," popular for general household use. Some potters migrated north to Seto where they brought the knowledge of production of *Shirashi* wares and continued developing glaze technology. Other potters migrated south and to outlying areas, spreading the technology of the modified kilns and intentional ash glazing to other areas from Tokoname and Atsumi on the eastern coast to Echizen and Kaga on the northwest coast.

During the medieval period (the three centuries that followed), local regional kilns began producing unglazed stonewares of utilitarian function. These kilns were the mainstay of pottery in Japan from the 12th through the 16th centuries. Amongst the wares produced in this period, the most typical set comprised large jars with narrow necks (*tsubo*), wide-mouthed vats (*kame*), and mortar basins (*suribachi*). The latter when inverted over the necks of the jars and vats also served as lids. These vessel types were used primarily to support the agricultural life as storage, brewing, and cooking utensils, and were used secondarily as cinerary urns and burial jars. Various smaller, simple household utensils such as bowls, dishes, and bottles also were produced in some of the kilns. Most of these were made solely for local consumption but some, made in kilns located near seaports, were shipped to other areas.

Although user needs, and therefore pot types, were similar all over Japan, differences in local clays and in firing techniques resulted in a variety of identifiable regional wares. For a long time only a few of these kilns sites were known and they were referred to as the "Six Old Kilns" (Seto, Tokoname, Echizen, Shigaraki, Tamba, and Bizen). Since the 1950's, however, archaeologists have uncovered at least 30 kilns making unglazed stonewares at this time. Often these kilns occur at the sites of earlier *Sue* kilns where deposits of high firing clays had been discovered and primitive *anagama* kilns had been dug into the hillsides.

REGIONAL KILNS

The only medieval kiln to produce glazed wares from the 12th-15th century were the Seto kilns. In this area there was an abundance of good clay, fuel, and some independent, provincial patrons. The return of political stability in the 12-13th centuries during the early Kamakura period brought a resumption of trade with China and more ceramics were imported. As demand outstripped supply, there was still a desire for glazed wares of local manufacture. Therefore the potters, who had come from Sanage, continued to produce ash-glazed pieces following Chinese shapes. In the 13th century, glazes were compounded with the addition of feldspathic clays to the ash glaze.

This major modification represents a whole new understanding of glaze composition and opened the way for a greater variety of glazed wares. The resulting feldspathic ash glaze was more viscous and faintly cloudy; it did not run so readily down and off the sides of the pots. Typical for ash-fluxed glazes, the surface tends to be somewhat broken in a mottled pattern. Underglaze decoration of the earliest of these pots was stamped and later it was carved or combed, emulating various types of Chinese porcelain and celadon jars. The principle types produced include *meiping* bottles (see slide 10); ewers; Buddhist incense burners; and wide-shouldered jars with narrow necks, lugs on the shoulder, and three widely spaced, horizontal lines around the body.

While some Sanage potters went to the Seto kilns, others helped establish regional stoneware potteries. Migrating south to the Chita Peninsula, they established the Tokoname kilns for the production of large, thick-walled utilitarian stonewares. Using a local refractory, iron-bearing clay, and hand-building pots by the coil method, these potters produced the three basic wares of medieval ceramics: wide-mouthed vats (*kame*), narrow-necked jars (*tsubo*), and basins with combed ridges to use as mortars (*suribachi*). These Tokoname kilns (the kiln site is vast, with hundreds of separate kilns) were the earliest of the medieval kilns to make quantities of these basic wares for rural consumption. Because the potters there were familiar with the advanced kiln designs developed at Sanage, the Tokoname kilns

were among the first medieval stoneware kilns to practice oxidation firing. The iron-rich clays of the area produced dark red-brown pots in the more economical, steeper, oxidizing kilns fitted with "flame-dividing pillars." Fuelled by burning pine they reached temperatures of around 1250° C and produced a dark olive-green natural ash glaze.

There seems to be a particularly close connection between the kilns of Tokoname on the eastern seaboard and Echizen on the northern coast. Both kilns made medium sized jars with the three-line decoration found on some Seto jars, and both make early use of the oxidizing kiln. Some direct communication must have existed. Perhaps a few Sanage potters migrated directly to that area, or perhaps some of those who started the Tokoname kilns later took their expertise across the island. The northwestern coast of Japan bordering on the Sea of Japan is geographically removed from the rich agricultural areas of the Yamato and Kanto plains (see maps). Although there were communication links by overland mountain roads and by sea, these areas developed independently for long periods at a stretch. The kilns at Echizen evolved in an area near the terminus of the major roadway through the mountains linking the two regions, and near a good harbor on the Japan Sea.

Further north, on the Noto Peninsula, was the site of the Suzu kilns. These kilns had been in operation as *Sue* kilns since the 5th century when they may have received the technology directly from Korea. A gradual change over to the medieval pottery happened in the late 12th century as production increased after a century or more of decline. Large hand-built jars (*tsubo*), vats (*kame*), and mortars (*suribachi*) gradually outnumber or replace the smaller wheel-thrown vessels in the older tradition. Suzu kilns never changed from reduction to oxidation firing, so their medieval wares appear as heavier, more substantial versions of *Sue* ware. In the earlier period some pots were decorated with combed wave patterns as found on *sue* ware, and incised grass and flower designs reflecting those found on some Tokoname jars and ultimately derived from Heian and Kamakura scroll painting. In time, combed decoration becomes more free and irregular. In the Kamakura period the thick-walled pots are generally formed by stacked coils smoothed and strengthened by patting with a

carved wooden paddle; the surface decoration reflects the directional rhythm of the patting and the particular design of the carved paddle. Horizontal rows of circular flowers, sweeping diagonals of short striations, and vertical herringbone patterns suggest different personalities at work (see slide 13).

The medieval kilns at Shigaraki do not seem to have developed from *Sue* wares, though there were such wares and even some lead-glazed wares produced in the narrow Shigaraki valley in the Heian period. Medieval stonewares from the region were produced in various small kiln sites located in mountain valleys near supplies of fuel and water and deposits of the refractory clay.

Shigaraki pots are known by the particular clay with which they were made. This high-firing, iron-bearing clay fires to a rich reddish brown. It typically contains stones which break through the surface causing cracks and small holes, and bits of feldspar that partially melt into shiny, white, glassy bumps (see slide 11).

Not far from Shigaraki are the Iga kilns. Pots from these two areas are hard to differentiate because they are made from similar clays, and the potters were probably in close contact with each other. Iga clay differs somewhat in that it contains more iron and larger quantities of feldspar; it fires to a darker color and produces a whiter (feldspathic) natural glaze. In the late 16th century, both Shigaraki and Iga wares were noticed and acquired by tea masters who were beginning to use local wares.

By the 17th century in the Momoyama period, possibly under the guidance of the bold tea master Furuta Oribe (see below), Iga ware flower vases and fresh water pots (*mizusashi*) began to be produced specifically for tea use and they become noticeably distinct from Shigaraki wares. Potters were encourage to exaggerate the [unselfconscious] serendipitous effects of the crude potting and uncontrolled kiln firings. The naturally coarse clay, sometimes a mixture of two clays, might have had stones added to it. The symmetrical thrown or coil-built pots were cut, pushed, and squeezed into irregular but uniquely balanced, harmonious forms (see slide 12). Some pieces were fired up to 13 times, sometimes at temperatures reaching 1500° C. They were judiciously placed in the kiln where it

was most likely that they would become partially coated with a natural ash glaze. As the repeated firings caused more fissures, more stones were brought to the surface creating the rough texture for which these pots are known. A description of contemporary Iga ware catches its essence: "Cracks and splits on the surface are desired, and the primitive appearance, with twisted and rugged shapes, more closely resembles a product of nature than of man" (Cary, p. 261).

Bizen is a town further south along the Inland Sea. Its medieval kiln tradition starts in the late 12th century evolving directly from its *Sue* kilns of the 5th-7th centuries. As Bizen clay is naturally fine-grained, potters continued to use the potter's wheel except for the very large pieces which were made by the coil method and then finished on a wheel.

In the early medieval period the kilns were moved up into the foothills where they were patronized by the prosperous Kumayama Shrine. The retreat into the mountains continued until sometime in the late 14th or 15th century when new commercial opportunities lured the potters back to the marketplace. Here, as at other kilns, the medium-sized jar with a straight neck and four handles on the shoulder became popular as a container for shipping and storing tea leaves. New deposits of fine grained, refractory, iron-bearing clay were discovered 6 to 12 feet under the rice paddies. It was highly plastic and suitable for throwing thin-walled pots. Naturally dense and waterproof at stoneware temperatures, it was seldom glazed at this time. Surface variety was created by the effects of the firing, including dustings of natural glaze and imprinting of red lines from wrappings of wet straw (see slide 14). The clay fired from a buff to a rich dark brown color in oxidation firings. To accommodate the large quantities of pots made there after the 15th century, potters constructed wider kilns on the model of the Sanage type with its flame-dividing pillar. Many kinds of household utensils and tea ceremony wares were made.

TEA CEREMONY CERAMICS
KAMAKURA TO EARLY EDO PERIODS
(1185-ca.1620)

The tea ceremony evolved through different phases since it was introduced with Zen Buddhism in the 12th century. As we have seen, with the return of political stability in the early Kamakura period (1185-1333), trade with China resumed and new kinds of ceramics were imported. Along with porcelains and celadons, which stimulated the further development of ash glazes in the Seto kilns, there were brown glazed bowls, jars, and small containers used for making and drinking tea in Zen Buddhist monasteries. Zen Buddhism (called Chan in China) focused on achieving enlightenment in this lifetime rather than on salvation in an afterlife. Its monastic training involved self discipline, focused concentration, and material simplicity which appealed to Japan's ruling warrior class. The practice of drinking tea in order to stay awake through long hours of meditation had developed, with monks being served the tea in a solemn and expeditious manner. In a great hall in the temple, each monk was given his own bowl with the powder already in it. The priest would walk around to each, pouring the hot water and stirring the tea briskly with a whisk. The tea is bright green, opaque, and refreshingly bitter.

Religious pilgrims and traders travelling to China in the 12th and 13th centuries brought back various Song dynasty wares. Whereas porcelain and celadons alone had been imported earlier and had already stimulated the Japanese ceramic industry, the brown-glazed bowls were new at this time. Originally from southern Chinese kilns, these dark brown to black oxidized, iron-glazed wares were called *temmoku* in Japan, a term derived from the Chinese *Tianmu*, the name of the monastic complex where they were used by Japanese travellers. Tea bowls, small jars or caddies for holding the powdered tea, and large jars for storing tea leaves were made of this ware.

Requests for native pots in this style challenged the Seto kilns, the only kilns making glazed ware in Japan at the beginning in the 14th century. Experiments with iron oxide under ash glaze produced thin, pale glazes, but by the 15th century iron-bearing clays were used

to create a thick, brownish-black slip glaze (see slide 15). Sometimes it was used in combination with ash glaze to produce mottled effects recalling those named "rabbits fur" or "tortoise shell" on Chinese bowls.

By the early Muromachi period (late 14th-mid 15th century) when the country was ruled by the Ashikaga Shogunate, tea was being served in a more elegant manner in the mansions of the ruling shogun and the daimyo (or lords of the land). The shoguns retained advisers to take care of their art collections and instruct them in the proper way to prepare and serve tea, for tea drinking was becoming an important social ritual. Guests would be invited to enjoy tea as part of a refined banquet served on individual lacquer tables. After the meal, tea was brought in from the kitchen already prepared in individual bowls. As the guest sipped the tea from imported Chinese ceramic bowls they were treated to a display of the host's Chinese art collection, though the sparse and careful arrangement reflected Japanese taste. White porcelain, sometimes with underglaze blue decoration, a variety of green-glazed celadon, and rich brown *temmoku* Chinese ceramic wares were used for this social ritual.

The Onin War (1467-77) began a period of 100 years of civil war in Japan which brought down the Ashikaga shogunate. Massive social disruption ensued which impoverished the aristocracy, furthered the rise of the merchant class, and eventually put commoners, who had risen to power in the armed camps, in charge of the country. There was a tremendous spurt in commercial activity within Japan as well as increased trade, not only with China, but also with Southeast Asia, the Philippines, and Korea. With the collapse the Muromachi period (Ashikaga shogunate) local military rulers regained control of their lands. Ceramics that had been produced for local consumption began to be seen as sources of revenue. Pots from the various regional kilns were beginning to reach common markets in urban centers.

One new impetus for patronage was the increased interest and gradual transformation in the tea ceremony. The formal tea ceremony continued to thrive during this period, forging links between the aristocrats who had taste and no money and the merchants who now had ready capital. Although politically and financially weakened, the

shoguns maintained their impressive art collections and their rarified existence, including their aesthetic tea gatherings. A succession of the advisers employed to look after the shoguns' collections and instruct them in matters of taste gradually altered the style of the tea ceremony to reflect more closely Japanese taste beginning in the mid 15th century. The elaborate banquets of earlier times gave way as the Zen values of simplicity and direct awareness were reintegrated into the ceremony. The respect once given to Chinese art ebbed as the inclusion of native Japanese art and ceramics began to be encouraged. The room that tea was served in became small and rustic, and the tea master or host prepared the tea himself in front of the guests. This humble approach was called *wabi* tea or "poverty" tea.

The adviser (or Tea Master) whose name is most closely associated with the "Way of Tea" as this style came to be known, was Sen no Rikyū (1521-1591). Rikyū was particularly responsible for the inclusion of native Japanese wares. He liked the humble, unpretentious stonewares of the medieval kilns and those with a particularly harmonious balance of clay, shape, texture, and accidental glazes, such as Shigaraki and Iga wares. His interest also stimulated production at the new Mino kilns, and he was directly responsible for the invention of Raku, a low-fire pottery ware used primarily for tea bowls.

A follower of Rikyū, Furuta Oribe (1544-1615), was less inclined towards *wabi* aesthetics, focusing instead on the unique and unusual qualities of certain ceramics. His taste was bold and dramatic; he encouraged exaggerated distortions of form and startling combinations of color and pattern. Oribe ware, a pottery type originating in the Mino kilns in the late 16th century, reflects his particular taste and contribution to the art of tea.

TEA WARES AND KILN TECHNOLOGY

The changing patterns of patronage in the late 15th century caused changes in the activity of the various kilns. The Seto kilns lost support at this time and the production of glazed ceramics passed to the Mino kilns in the adjacent province. Probably many potters from Seto migrated to the area and along with Mino potters created new wares.

The developments in the Seto/Mino wares mark the beginning of a shift from the medieval period of ceramics to the early modern period. Reflecting the more competitive, commercial nature of the times, more utilitarian dishware and tea wares were produced and fewer objects were made for religious and ceremonial use. Among the wealthy merchant class and the more affluent provincial rulers the demand for pots rose. Potters sought new, more efficient modes of production and new wares to satisfy the tastes of the style-conscious merchant class. New and more colorful ceramic wares were being imported from Ming China which influenced the development of Japanese wares.

Eventually, this desire for more variety led to the abandonment of the through-draft *anagama* kiln with its "fire-dividing pillar" in favor of a new type of kiln called the *ogama* (see Diagram B). The *ogama* ("great kiln") was wider toward the front, tapering gradually upward to a narrow chimney. It was not dug so deeply into the ground, but was constructed with side walls and a series of pillars down the center to support the arched roof and divide the kiln chamber roughly into two halves. Potters no longer had to crawl in from the ends to fill or empty the kiln, for the *ogama* had a doorway on one side for stacking the kiln. The fire box, which was a step down from the kiln chamber, was divided from the kiln chamber by a row of free-standing pillars capped with clay filled saggars. A moderate down draft was created resulting in more efficient and even firings. This kiln transformation was complete by the beginning of the 16th century when it opened the way for a new developments in glazed ceramics.

Temmoku wares continue with greater sophistication with the production of tea caddies for holding a small amount of powdered tea,

enough for one serving. Light colored bodies were washed with iron oxide to emulate the dark wares from southern China. The small jars were highly treasured objects and were passed from one generation of tea masters to the next (see slide 15). Later developments with the iron slip produced another rich, luscious black glaze with a thick, matte surface. Pots were pulled from the kiln with long tongs (which sometimes left a mark) at the peak of the firing and allowed to cool quickly. This Black Seto ware was used primarily for tea bowls.

The new *ogama* firings also encouraged experiments with the ash glazes. Adding a little iron-bearing clay produced a pleasant faint opacity to the transparent yellow oxidized glaze. These Yellow Seto wares were often decorated with incised plant designs, sometimes highlighted with splashes of copper green or iron brown. A glaze called ash Shino was produced by adding white feldspar or feldspathic clay to the basic ash glaze. The resulting creamy white glaze was was prized as "white *temmoku*" on classic sloping sided tea bowls. Compounding the glaze with higher proportions of feldspar and less ash, resulted in the thick, faintly translucent, truly white glaze known as Shino. The thickness and opacity were achieved by deliberate underfiring of the glaze which could become shiny, and clear in higher or longer firings. The Japanese potter preferred the tactile sense of the underfired glaze, its thick, sometimes dry or broken texture.

The evolution of this glaze was closely associated with experiments in painting designs in underglaze iron oxide, called E-Shino (painted Shino) (see slide 16). The practice of underglaze painting was explored, inspired perhaps by blue and white porcelains, or perhaps Chinese or Thai slip painted pottery. The Japanese style is very different from any of these possible models, however, combining a intimate naturalism with a sense of abstraction and patterning. Reeds, bamboo, or willows bend in the breezes above criss-crossing trellis or grass designs; three or four plovers, sparrows, or sometimes wild geese fly across the empty space. Manmade objects such as bridges, umbrellas, and abandoned wagon wheels with poetic references to the fleeting passage of time find their way onto the pots. Border designs are freely brushed linear patterns and abbreviated trailing vines or waves motifs.

Contrasting decorative designs were also produced by carving through a layer of dark slip applied to the light body. The light designs were enhanced by the white glaze and the dark slip read through the glaze as a brown, a reddish, or a soft gray color (see slide 17). The range of colors and textures of the glazes was created by the variable thicknesses of the glaze, its constitution, and the conditions in the kiln. These wares are perfect expressions of the Japanese respect for the nature of the materials and the mystery of the process. The Japanese potter worked as if in a dialogue with the clay, glaze, and fire, exerting his control only partially over their intrinsic qualities of malleability, texture, and color. Often designs were unclear under the thick glaze, an effect appreciated at its profoundest level by the Japanese, who find the highest levels of spirit in what is obscure: shrouded or only partially seen or sensed.

For tea ceremony wares, unusual and irregular shapes take precedence over perfectly round thrown pieces. Cut-out and pierced decoration sometimes alleviate the uniformity of thrown dishes. Loosely rounded shapes were produced by centering a pancake of clay on the wheel and adding coils of clay from which the walls and rim of the dish were thrown. Further manipulation of the form might include squaring off the round shape (see slide 17). Often the disc at the base juts out in these Shino wares.

A bolder style with startling contrasts and juxtapositions was encouraged by Furuta Oribe. Named in reference to this tea master, Oribe wares exhibit contrasting areas of plain glaze, sometimes black, but usually a bright copper-green called *Ao-oribe* (green oribe) with areas of underglaze iron oxide designs. Pure patterns such as stripes and checkerboards set alongside natural and man-made objects create surprisingly satisfying designs of arbitrary isolated details of life. Some oribe wares were made with clay slightly tinted with iron oxide to produce a pinkish body then decorated in white slip outlined with dark iron oxide under a thin, clear glaze (see slide 18). The forms are also inventive, often angular and sometimes complex. They are made by rolling and cutting slabs of clay and forming them in molds (see slide 18).

These brilliant ceramics were produced in a new style of kiln introduced into Japan from Korea at the very end of the 16th century. The *noborigama*, or hill climbing kiln, was not dug into the hillside like the *anagama*, tunnel kilns (see Diagram C). Instead a series of leveled steps that were carved into the hillside were walled in to create a succession of chambers connected by a low vent hole in partition walls. The whole was covered with an arched, sometimes, domed roof. (The kiln is also referred to as a *waridake*, or split bamboo kiln, referring perhaps to the plant's segmented stalks.)

In firing, the kiln produced a series of down-drafts. Heat rising from the fire would enter the first chamber, rise toward the arched roof and then be drawn down again over the wares to the low vent to the next chamber until it reached the end, a wall with several large vent holes. The firing, started in the fire box at the bottom, with sticks being added through stoke holes in each chamber until reaching the uppermost chamber just before completion. It was very economical because it could fire many fairly large chambers at once. It also produced an oxidation firing of a fairly uniform, high temperature. Consequently, Oribe and Shino wares (after the 17th century) usually have glossier, more transparent glazes.

The *noborigama* kiln was introduced after Hideyoshi's campaigns against that country in 1592 and 1598. The most notable result of these expeditions, referred to as the "pottery wars," was the large scale importation of the much-favored Korean pottery wares and their makers. The potters, who were very well received and protected by important manor lords, set up kilns in northern Kyushu and Western Honshu, especially in areas near the port of Karatsu in Saga Province. That there was substantial communication between potters of Mino and those of Karatsu has been established, and it is thought that the *noborigama* was introduced to Mino from this area of Kyushu. Perhaps Korean potters were located in both places at this time.

Karatsu wares from this early period reflect the Korean pottery that the Japanese had been admiring and importing for tea ceremony wares since the mid 15th century when trade was officially established between a warlord in Kyushu and the Choson government of Korea. One group of pots that was especially popular in Japan were those

decorated with white slip under a thin transparent glaze. In Korea these high-fired bowls were used by peasants for rice or soup, but they were sought by the Japanese as tea bowls, exemplifying the *wabi* tea taste. Some of the new kilns along the west coast of Honshu produced similar wares, especially the Hagi kilns. Other Karatsu wares were decorated with freely painted designs in iron brown, copper red, or cobalt blue underglaze. Japanese E-Karatsu (painted Karatsu) ware has painted decoration in iron under an opaque blue-gray glaze. The designs, usually freely painted birds, reeds, grasses, or trees, recall both Choson examples and designs used on Shino ware, indicating the Japanese potters' and tea masters' great appreciation of this Korean ware and its influence on their own designs (see slide 19).

Kyoto was not a traditional center of pottery making, but with the growing wealth and sophistication of the merchant class, this cultural city became an important site for the production, as well as marketing, of many fine Japanese crafts. Sen no Rikyū, who supported and inspired potters in many established kilns, helped bring about the creation of a new pottery ware later known as *raku* ware. He encouraged a man named Chōjirō, the son of an immigrant Korean tile maker, to use his ceramic skills in the making of tea bowls. The result was a bowl so totally suited to the need that a lineage of potters (which still exists and makes tea bowls today) was established, and honored with the name "Raku" and a golden seal by the shogun. *Raku* means pleasure, or comfort. The special characteristics of this ware are its low-fired, light, porous body; its thick-walled straight-sided shape with its small ring foot; and its thick matte to shiny, glazed surface. Traditionally, black, red, and some soft white glazes were used. The thickness, texture, and color of the bowls complemented the frothy, bright green tea perfectly.

Raku pots, which were made according to a fairly strict set of principles, were always hand made, usually as pinch pots, and therefore bore the individual expression of the potter. They are bisqued before being covered with several layers of glaze to create a thick, soft surface. Red *raku* was glazed with lead glaze colored with red iron oxide and yellow ochre; black *raku* glaze was made from local iron-bearing pebbles found in the Kamo River, called *Kamgawa ishi*.

They sometimes have a thin layer of transparent glaze on top; the iron glaze alone is a dryish, stoney black.

The technique of firing *raku* pots is one of their most distinctive features (see Diagram D). Instead of being placed in a cold kiln and fired slowly, with the heat increased slowly over a period of several days, *raku* pots are put into a small kiln that has already reached a dull red heat, about 800° C. They are heated until the glaze matures, about 1000° C for red raku and a little hotter for black, for 20-45 minutes. Then the pots are quickly removed with tongs from the kiln and allowed to cool quickly in the air or in cool water. The latter produces the immediate crazing of the glaze, a desired effect, which, although not readily seen on a black bowl, always contributed to the softness of the glaze and of its sound against the bamboo whisk. Altogether, *raku* tea bowls embodied what a tea bowl should be: a subtly irregular shape which fits comfortably in the hands; a thick insulating glaze with a natural stoney, or mysteriously glowing, appearance; an irregular rim which invites sipping from one particular side; and a softly muffled sound which would not disturb the subdued atmosphere of the tea room.

SUMMARY

Japanese pottery records the particular sensibilities of the Japanese culture. Potters worked with clay in an interactive and expressive manner. Starting with the uniquely decorated pots of the Jōmon period, we observe the individual creativity of the potter combined with the nature of the clay, a characteristic observable all through the development of Japanese ceramics. We find it unselfconsciously exhibited in the medieval pots and more consciously explored in the tea ceremony wares.

Although most technological growth came as a result of inspiration from China and direct tutelage from Korea, the Japanese created their own ceramic tradition in the way they utilized and developed these influences. The imported kiln technology, which evolved further with use in Japan, served to evoke distinctly Japanese

wares unlike those of their teachers. For instance, .the look of Chinese celadon wares was transformed into something more subtle, free flowing, and personal in the hands of the Japanese potter.

Pottery, as all art, always involves creation and response. As the potters made and fired their wares they responded to what emerged from the kiln choosing what effects to pursue and what to discard. Patronage also played a part in the process, providing a changing context in which the imagination and skills of the potters were challenged.

Pottery is just one of the arts in which the Japanese deep respect for craftsmanship is demonstrated. This respect is manifested in their practice of focusing attention on the distinctive nature of the materials with which they work. This essential nature of the material then determines the process with which it is worked and the and the manner in which it is decorated. Thus pots exhibit a delight in the textures and malleability of clay and in the great variety of ways the clay surface can be decorated. The mysteries of transformation by fire were never analyzed too closely, with an intent to exercise complete control, but rather were engaged with great respect and perhaps wonder for its gifts.

Attention to the nature of materials engenders attention to detail. Potters and patrons, encouraged sometimes by the meditative atmosphere of the tea ceremony, paid loving attention to the particularities of the piece, therefore preferring those pieces where there were irregularities of form, texture, and glaze. Also, where intentional decoration is used, Japanese pots exhibit a deeply satisfying delight in and gratitude for the beauty of things, all things man-made and of nature through the juxtapositions of all kinds of images, often only close-up partial views. A sense of the mysteriousness of the world is shown by ambiguousness, by obscuring an image beneath thick glaze, or by intentional imperfections. As a Zen teacher once said, the Japanese find spirit "in things as It is."

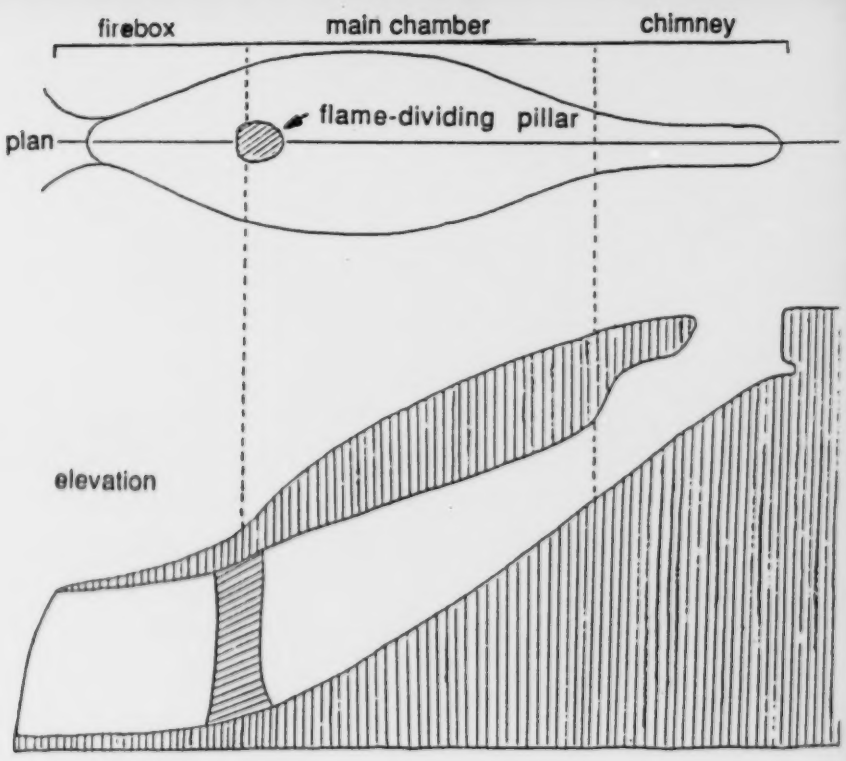


Figure A

ANAGAMA
"TUNNEL KILN"

The earliest *anagama* are simply tunnels dug into a hillside. A later version invented at Sanage added the "flame-dividing pillar" which created a more even heat and hotter temperatures.

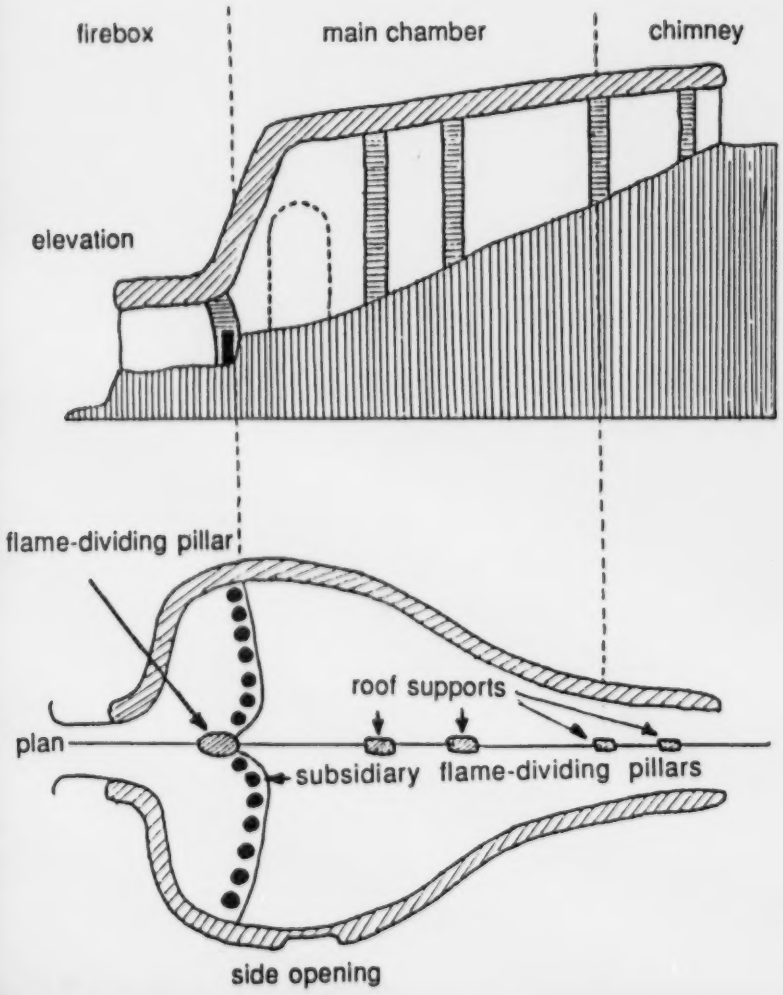


Figure B

OGAMA
"GREAT KILN"

The *ogama* is a much wider kiln with roof supports down the center and a row of flame dividing columns between the fire box. It has a larger capacity and heats evenly. The chamber was loaded through a side entrance.

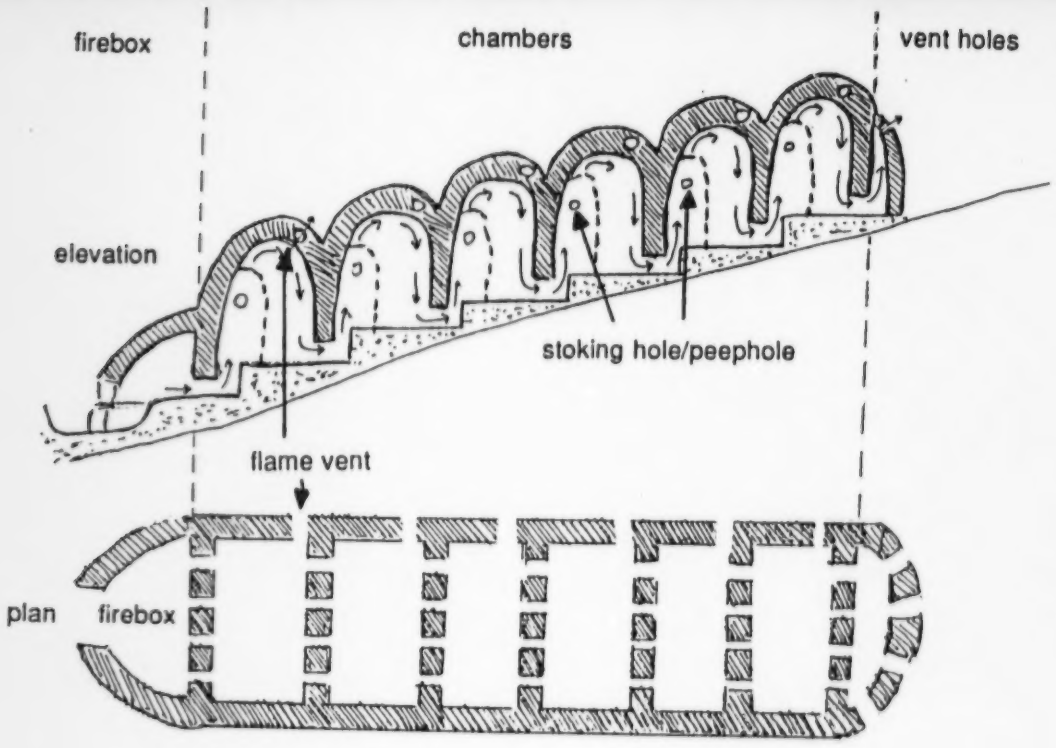


Figure C

NOBORIGAMA "HILL CLIMBING KILN"

The *noborigama* kiln is composed of many interconnected chambers fired from the fire box and by adding sticks through holes in the bricked-up entrances to each chamber.

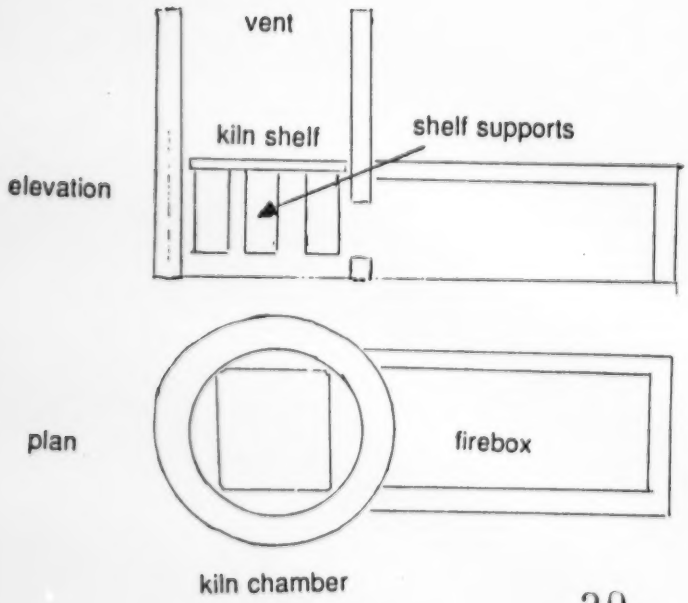
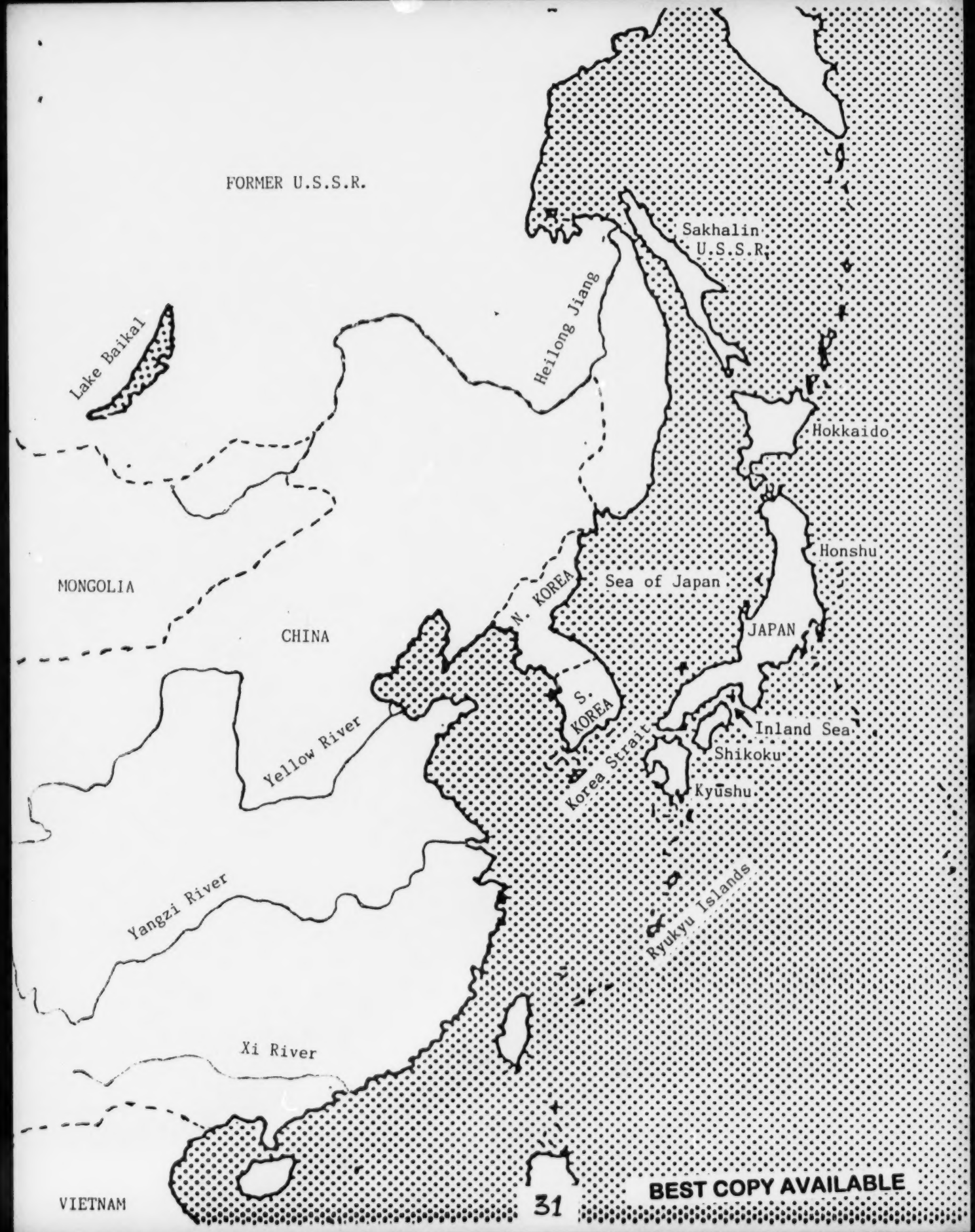


Figure D

RAKU KILN

This small simple kiln is a basic raku kiln with firebox and vertical updraft kiln chamber. A kiln shelf sits on supports elevated to the height of the top of the firebox. Sometimes saggars are used to protect the wares. Muffle kilns pack the area around the saggar with charcoal.



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A FEELING FOR CLAY
JAPANESE POTTERY FROM ANCIENT TO PRE-MODERN TIMES

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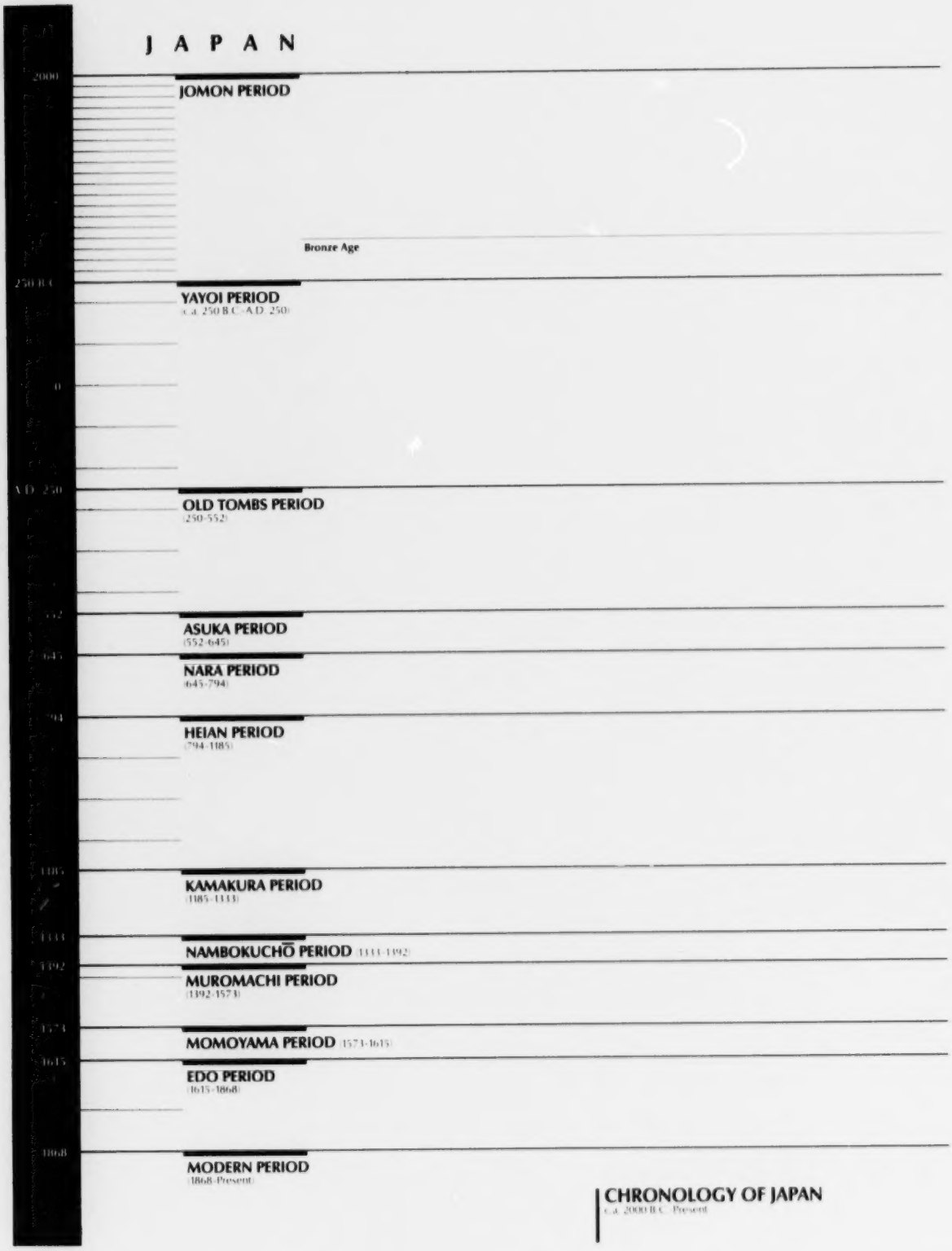

CHRONOLOGY OF JAPAN
c.a. 2000 B.C.–Present

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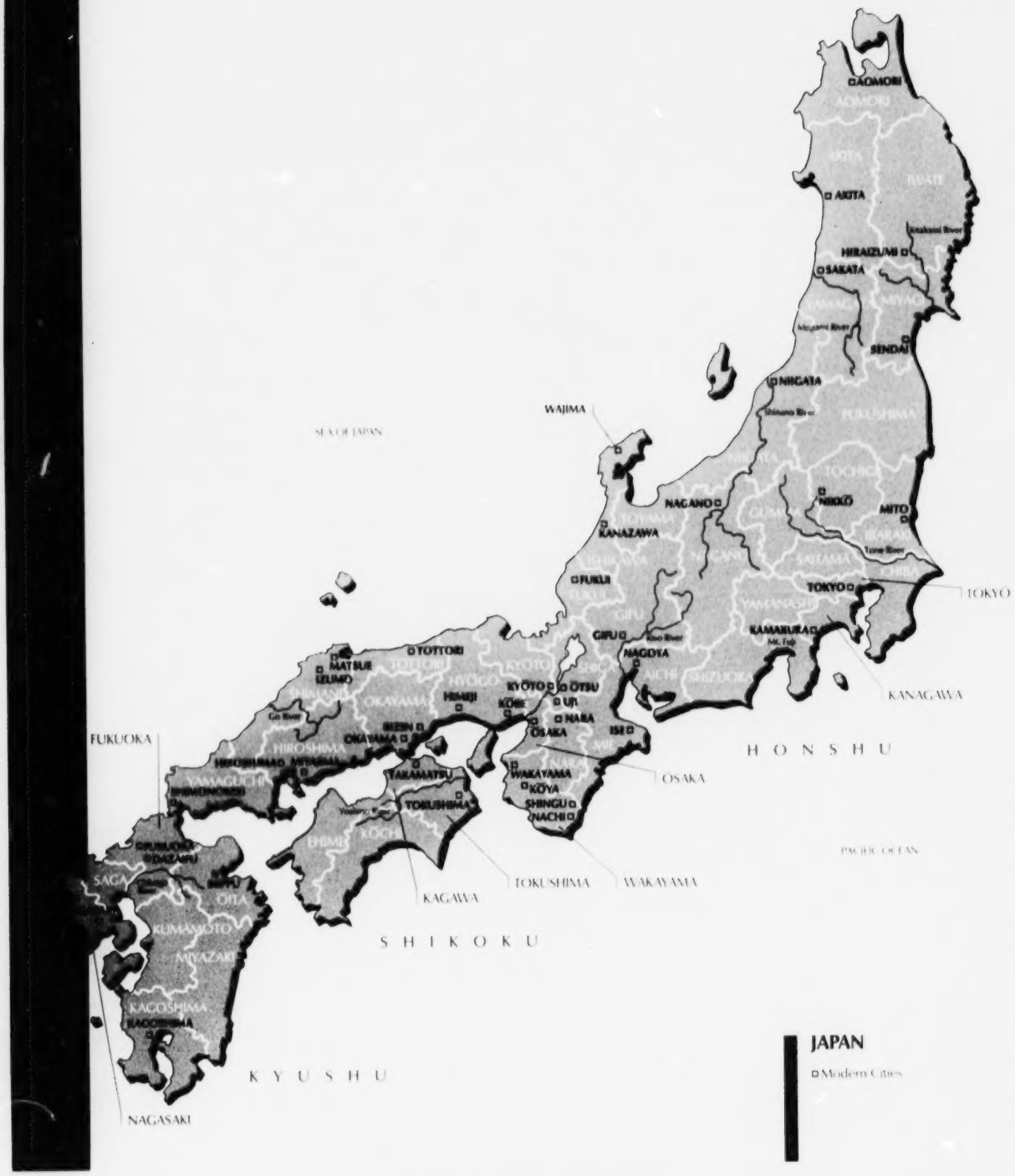
JAPAN



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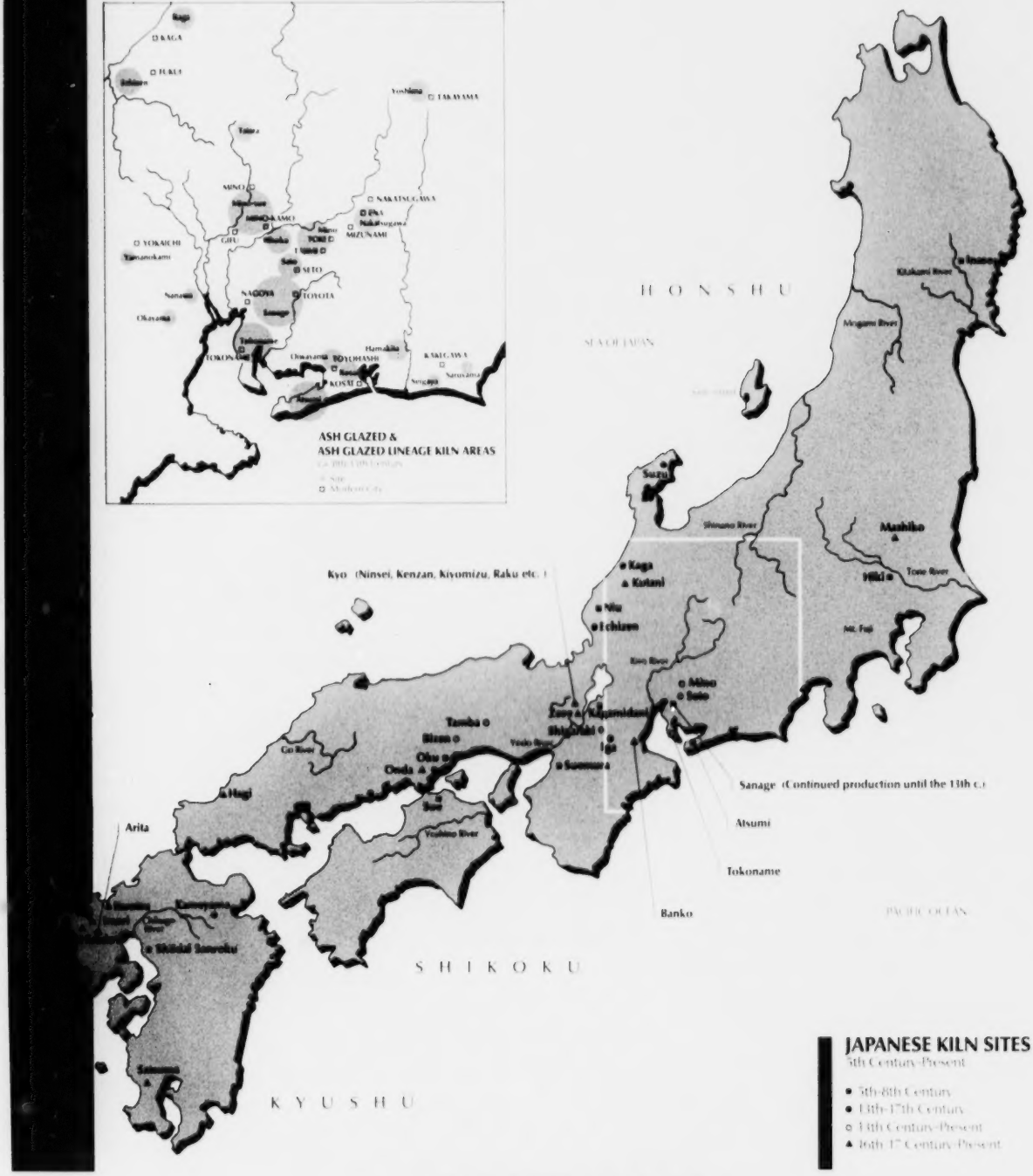

JAPANESE KILN SITES

5th Century-Present

- 5th-8th Century
- 13th-17th Century
- 13th Century-Present
- ▲ 16th-17 Century-Present

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A FEELING FOR CLAY

JAPANESE POTTERY FROM ANCIENT TO PRE-MODERN TIMES

SLIDE LIST

1. RITUAL VESSEL
Earthenware
Jōmon period (Eastern Japan), (3000-2000 B.C.)
H: 17 3/4 in. W: 14 1/2 in.
B60 P932

2. DOGŪ FIGURINE
Unglazed earthenware
Late Jōmon period
(1000-300 B.C.)
H: 2 7/8 in. W: 3 7/8 in.
D: 1 1/8 in.
B69 S31

3. STORAGE JAR
Earthenware
Late Yayoi period
(2nd-3rd century A.D.)
H: 19 1/8 in. D: 15 in.
B60 P134+

4. JAR AND STAND
Earthenware, Haji ware
Kofun period
(4th-5th century A.D.)
Jar: H: 5 7/8 in.
D: 5 1/2 in.
Stand: H: 5 1/8 in.
D: 6 7/8 in.
B 62 P3+ and P4+

5. PAIR OF FEMALE *HANIWA*
Earthenware
Late Kofun period
(ca. 6th century A.D.)
Left: H: 24 in. W: 7 7/8 in.
Right: H: 23 5/8 in.
W: 6 1/2 in.
B60 S164+ and S165+

6. JAR ON HIGH FOOT WITH FOUR SMALL JARS
Stoneware with natural ash glaze, Sue ware
Kofun period
(ca. 6th century A.D.)
H: 18 in. W: 11 in.
B60 P537

7. BIRD-SHAPED BOTTLE
Stoneware, Sue ware
Late Kofun period (late 6th-early 7th century A.D.)
H: 5 1/8 in. L: 12 1/4 in.
B69 P35

8. LONG-NECKED BOTTLE
Stoneware with natural ash glaze, Sue ware
Early Nara period
(ca. 7th century A.D.)
H: 11 1/4 in. W: 7 7/8 in.
B60 P526

9. FLAT PITCHER WITH HANDLE
Stoneware with ash glaze, Sanage kilns
Heian period
(ca. A.D. 800-850)
H: 3 1/4 in. D: 5 1/4 in.
B87 P2

10. KO-SETO BOTTLE
Glazed stoneware, Seto kilns
Kamakura period
(early 14th century A.D.)
H: 10 5/8 in. D: 6 5/8 in.
1991.6

11. STORAGE JAR
Stoneware with natural ash glaze, Shigaraki kilns
Muromachi period
(ca. 15th century A.D.)
H: 21 1/4 in. W: 18 7/8 in.
B66 P38

12. TEA CEREMONY WATER JAR
Stoneware with natural ash glaze, Iga kilns
Edo period
(ca. 17th century A.D.)
H: 7 3/4 in. D: 7 3/4 in.
B68 P4

13. STORAGE JAR
Stoneware, Suzu kilns
Kamakura period
(late 13th-mid 14th century A.D.)
H: 14 1/2 in. D: 12 1/2 in.
1990.199

14. TEA-LEAF STORAGE JAR
Unglazed stoneware, Bizen kilns
Momoyama period
(early 17th century A.D.)
H: 10 3/4 in. D: 9 1/4 in.
B67 P10

15. POWDERED TEA CONTAINER (*CHAIRE*)
Stoneware with iron glaze, Mino kilns
Momoyama period
(late 16th-early 17th century A.D.)
H: 2 1/8 in. D: 2 1/4 in.
B85 P11

16. MUKŌZUKE DISH
Stoneware with underglaze iron
E-Shino ware, Mino kilns
Momoyama period
(late 16th century A.D.)
H: 1 7/8 in. W: 6 5/8 in.
B69 P1

17. MUKŌZUKE DISH
Stoneware with incised design in iron slip under milky glaze, Gray Shino ware, Mino kilns
Momoyama period
(A.D. 1573-1615)
H: 2 3/8 in. W: 6 3/8 in.
B69 P2

18. SQUARE DISH, INCENSE CONTAINER, DISH WITH HANDLE
Stoneware with glaze, Ao-Oribe ware and E-Oribe ware, Mino kilns
Momoyama period
(A.D. 1573-1615)
(L to R)
H: 2 1/4 in. W: 7 1/2 in.
[B67 P8];
H: 1 3/4 in. D: 2 in.
[B74 P4];
H: 5 7/8 in. W: 8 7/8 in.
[B64 P34];

19. MUKŌZUKE DISH
Stoneware with underglaze iron, E-Karatsu ware, Karatsu kilns, Kyushu
Momoyama-Edo period
(early 17th century)
H: 3 3/4 in. W: 3 1/2 in.
B74 P7

20. BLACK RAKU TEA BOWL
Earthenware with glaze
Edo period, Kyoto kilns
Attributed to Raku Sōnyū
(A.D. 1664-1716)
H: 2 3/16 in. W: 5 1/2 in.
B76 P5

A FEELING FOR CLAY

JAPANESE POTTERY FROM ANCIENT TO PRE-MODERN TIMES

SLIDE SCRIPT

1. RITUAL VESSEL, Earthenware, Jōmon period

This type of thick-walled pottery was made all over Japan for thousands of years during the country's neolithic period. Coils of clay are layered one on top of the other, then pinched and smoothed into shape. They are fired at low temperatures in an open pit, like a campfire.

The hunter-gathering populations of ancient Japan cooked stews, grains, and vegetables in pots shaped like this by nestling the deep, narrow base into hot coals.

But pots with this much decoration probably were not used for cooking but served some ceremonial function instead. Some archaeologists believe the designs may represent a particular family or clan.

2. DOGŪ FIGURINE, Unglazed earthenware
Late Jōmon period

The same ancient cultures who made the pot in the previous slide made small figurines like this.

We don't know exactly what these figurines represent with their goggle eyes, decorated bodies, and short limbs, but they may have been used in healing or fertility rituals.

Most of them seem to be female figures and they are almost always found intentionally broken and discarded in pits.

3. STORAGE JAR, Earthenware, Late Yayoi period

The rounded, swelling form of this pot, its light color, and its smooth, faintly decorated surface are very different from the Jōmon pot. It was made by a potter of the succeeding Yayoi period (ca. 300 B.C.-ca. A.D. 300).

While the Jōmon were a hunter-gatherer society, the Yayoi cultivated rice. Large quantities of rice were harvested at one time, and large containers like this one were used to store the grain for later use.

Yayoi pots were also made by the coil method. Notice the horizontal grooves. These are produced by smoothing the clay with the help of a slowly turning wheel.

4. JAR AND STAND, Earthenware, Haji ware
Kofun period

Thin-walled, elegantly shaped pots like this round-bottomed jar with its tall stand were used as offering dishes in religious ceremonies. Archaeologists have uncovered tombs where dishes like this have been found, sometimes with the remains of food still in them.

Red slip (very fine clay mixed with water) painted over the buff, sandy clay gives the pot a smooth glowing surface.

Imagine how the pot would look without its stand. Does the stand make it seem more or less important?

5. PAIR OF FEMALE *HANIWA*, Earthenware
Late Kofun period

Haniwa is the Japanese word for "cylinder." Cylindrical clay sculptures of people, horses, or even weapons were placed around the outside rim of tomb mounds to show the importance of the person buried inside.

These two figures represent female shamans, or women priests, of the ancient Japanese religion. They wear special comma-shaped jewels around their necks and carry round mirrors on their belts. The shamaness on the left holds a cup in her tiny arm.

What do you think the three sets of holes on their sides were for? We aren't sure, but some think bamboo poles were inserted in the holes so they could be carried.

6. JAR ON HIGH FOOT WITH FOUR SMALL JARS
Stoneware with natural ash glaze, *Sue* ware, Kofun period

This slide shows another kind of pottery that was found inside the tomb mounds of the Kofun and later periods (A.D. 300-ca. 750). This vessel was used in ceremonial offerings at the time of burial and left in the tomb, perhaps for use by the spirit in the afterlife. Wares of this type are called *Sue* wares from the word *sueru*, meaning "to offer."

Pottery such as this show that Japan had begun to borrow from the more technologically advanced cultures of mainland Asia. Korean potters introduced the use of a special clay and better kilns that could fire pots at higher temperatures to become the dense, hard, gray ceramic that characterizes *Sue* wares.

These potters also brought into Japan knowledge of the fast-turning potter's wheel so pots could be "thrown" or formed from a lump of clay.

Large or interestingly shaped pots were often made of smaller wheel-thrown pieces that were joined together. How many parts do you think were made separately?

7. BIRD-SHAPED BOTTLE, Stoneware, *Sue* ware,
Late Kofun period

This is another piece of dense, gray *Sue* ware. It is a pouring vessel made to hold and serve water or perhaps rice wine on ritual occasions. Does the shape remind you of any kind of animal or bird? We think of it as a duck, gliding on the water--or could it be a seal?.

The body was thrown as a shallow bowl and then two sides were folded over and joined. One end was pinched together to make the tail and the other curved up and left open where another piece was added to form the pouring spout.

8. LONG-NECKED BOTTLE
Stoneware with natural ash glaze, *Sue* ware
Early Nara period

Sue ware continued to be made into the early Nara and Heian periods of Japanese history. Can you identify the pieces which compose this bottle? How were they positioned and joined? Look at the direction of the circular grooves visible on the body and neck of this vessel.

The potter did not apply the splash of green glaze on this bottle. The first glazes were formed by accident. Blowing ashes

from the kiln fire fused with the molten feldspar in the clay to form a natural glaze on the sides of the pots closest to the fire.

The potters appreciated the beauty of the resulting glaze and began figuring out how to make glaze intentionally.

9. FLAT PITCHER WITH HANDLE
Stoneware with ash glaze, Sanage kilns, Heian period

What do you see different about this picture compared with previous pots? Notice the sharp angles of the body and the flat strap handle.

This pouring vessel also shows the newly developed skill of intentional glazing. The potter applied a yellow-green, glassy ash glaze on the top and left other areas unglazed. Unfortunately, time and burial have discolored or destroyed much of the original glaze on this piece.

10. KO-SETO BOTTLE, Glazed stoneware, Seto kilns
Kamakura period

Japanese potters looked to other Asian cultures for inspiration. This bottle shows the influence of Chinese ceramics in its glaze, design, and shape.

The Japanese call the olive green color of this glaze "old leaf color." The presence or absence of oxygen in a kiln helps determine what color the glaze will become. The Japanese were trying to copy the gray-green color of Chinese celadon pots. The glaze here is a brown-green caused by extra oxygen in the kiln.

11. STORAGE JAR, Stoneware with natural ash glaze, Shigaraki kilns, Muromachi period

This is a very large jar--almost two feet tall. Pots this big were made in several stages because the heavy clay would slump if the pot had been made all at once. Can you see the bulges where new coils were added when the pot below was dry and firm enough to hold the extra weight?

What do you notice about the texture of this jar? Shigaraki clay was very coarse, containing small stones and lumps of feldspar. There is no intentional decoration.

Shigaraki pots were orignially made for everyday use by village potters. But later in the 16th century, jars like this were admired for their strength, natural beauty, and imperfections by tea masters looking for unique and interesting vessels for use in the tea ceremony. Notice how many of the ceramics in the following slides were made for use in the tea ceremony.

12. TEA CEREMONY WATER JAR
Stoneware with natural ash glaze, Iga ware, Edo period

Some rough and irregular pots like the Shigaraki jar were the product of casual potting. Others like this jar were made irregular on purpose, just for the tea ceremony.

This jar started out as a perfectly round and symmetrical wheel-thrown pot. When it was not quite dry (a stage called "leather hard"), it was pushed, paddled, and poked into its own unique shape or personality.

Tea masters admired these individual pots so much that they sometimes even named them.

13. STORAGE JAR, Stoneware, Suzu kiln
Kamakura period

In another part of Japan, on the north coast of the main island of Honshu, high fired pots in the tradition of *Sue* wares continued to be made. You can identify this jar as *Sue* ware because it is made of the same dense, gray clay pictured in slides 6-8.

Like the Shigaraki jar (slide 11), this pot was made by the coil method and then paddled into shape. A carved wooden paddle left a loose herringbone pattern on the jar's body and a more flowing circular pattern on its shoulders.

14. TEA-LEAF STORAGE JAR, Unglazed stoneware
Bizen ware, Momoyama period

This jar is from the kilns at Bizen, in Western Honshu. Bizen wares are made from a dense, dark, iron-rich clay and are characterized by warm red tones.

The potters placed wet straw between the pots to keep them from sticking to each other during the firing. The straw burned during the firing process to produce the greatly admired random designs of red lines.

The jar was made to hold tea leaves. A lid was tied in place by means of the loops, or lugs, on the jar's shoulder.

15. POWDERED TEA CONTAINER with IVORY LID (*CHAIRE*)
Stoneware with iron glaze, Mino ware, Momoyama period

This is a very tiny jar, only about 2 inches tall. It was used to hold the tea used in the tea ceremony.

Tea for the tea ceremony is very different from the kind of tea most Americans drink. It is a fine powder and is bright green. You prepare this tea like hot chocolate--a pinch of the powdered tea is placed in a bowl (not a cup), hot water is added, and then the mixture is beaten until frothy with a whisk.

16. MUKŌZUKE DISH, Stoneware with underglaze iron
E-Shino Ware, Momoyama period

By the late 16th century, potters had learned to make glazes from different materials, not just wood ash. The milky glaze on this dish, for example, is made primarily from the mineral feldspar.

Japanese art reflects a love of nature and a genius for design. The design of this dish, for instance, balances the abstracted plant shapes with the patterns in the simple border.

The tea ceremony consisted of a small meal and the ritualistic making and drinking of the frothy, powdered tea. Dishes of various kinds and sizes were sought after for the meal (*kaiseki*) service as well as for the making of the tea itself. Japanese tea masters liked dishes that were slightly irregular in shape.

17. MUKŌZUKE DISH, Stoneware with incised design in iron slip under milky glaze, Gray Shino ware,
Momoyama period

This gray-blue dish is from the same kilns as the previous dish. It uses the same thick, white, bubbly glaze, but this dish was first covered with black iron oxide. The design

was then carved into the dark coating to expose the light pottery beneath before glazing.

At the end of the 16th century, a new stability was being established after a century of war. More and more people became interested in the tea ceremony. To meet the increased demand for tea wares, potters sometimes used molds to form the clay.

18. SQUARE DISH, INCENSE CONTAINER, and
DISH WITH HANDLE
Stoneware with glaze, Ao-Oribe ware and E-Oribe ware
Momoyama period

Here are two rectangular serving dishes and a small incense box of Oribe ware made at the Mino kilns. It is named for a tea master named Furuta Oribe, who preferred tea wares with unique and startling decorative designs.

Ao-(green) oribe has large areas of rich, dark, copper-green glaze contrasting with areas of pale white glaze and iron oxide painted decoration on the buff clay body.

The small incense box is very subtle compared to the green oribe dishes. How many colors do you see? There is soft pink background with a white flower and circles outlined in dark brown iron oxide.

Incense added to the quiet atmosphere of the tea ceremony and its appreciation of all the senses.

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Stoneware with underglaze iron, E-Karatsu ware
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Japanese tea practitioners had long been fond of certain Korean ceramics for tea wares. At the end of the 16th century a Japanese general took his army across the Korea Strait to try to conquer Korea. When he returned he brought back many Korean potters who introduced new kilns and styles of painting designs on pots. One ware, called E(painted)-Karatsu, was made on Kyushu, the island nearest Korea.

You may be surprised to learn this cup-like dish was made not for liquids, but to hold a small helping of a chopped vegetable or pickle for the *kaiseki* meal.

20. BLACK RAKU TEA BOWL, Earthenware with glaze
Edo period, Attributed to Raku Sōnyū (A.D. 1664-1716)

Of all the tea ceremony dishes, the tea bowl was the most important. It was the focus of the actual ceremony and the container handled by host and guest. Tea bowls are so special they were often given their own names by their owners.

Raku tea bowls were particularly admired because they hold heat well and feel good in the hands.

This bowl has a comfortable, thick, pitted, black glaze. The straight sides and flat bottom and small circular foot are all characteristic of these tea bowls.

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Stoneware with iron glaze, Mino ware, Momoyama period

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DISH WITH HANDLE
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The small incense box is very subtle compared to the green oribe dishes. How many colors do you see? There is soft pink background with a white flower and circles outlined in dark brown iron oxide.

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JAPANESE POTTERY FROM ANCIENT TO PRE-MODERN TIMES

SLIDE DESCRIPTIONS

1. RITUAL VESSEL, Earthenware
Jōmon period (Eastern Japan), (3000-2000 B.C.)
H: 17 3/4 in. W: 14 1/2 in. B60 P932

The hunter-gathering populations of the Jōmon period settled in small communities, where they built circular houses with sunken floors and made clay pots for cooking and serving food. Deep narrow pots were made to sit down in the hot coals for cooking stews, grains, and vegetables. The pots were formed by layering long coils of clay one on top of the other, pinching and smoothing the surface by hand. This type of thick-walled pottery was fired in open pits at low temperatures of only 700-800° C. The earliest Japanese pottery dates to around 10,000 B.C., making it one of the oldest pottery traditions in the world.

The term Jōmon ("cord-marked") reflects a decorative technique produced on pottery during this period. Cord or cord-wrapped sticks were rolled and pressed on the pot creating a textured surface. However, a wide range of decorative techniques was also employed, many of which can be seen in this vessel. Some pots like this one were made with wide flaring mouth rims richly decorated with sculptural loops, swirls, and hooks of clay. This time-consuming process required careful, deliberate handworking. These fancy pots were probably not for cooking but served a ceremonial function instead. Some archaeologists believe they may have been family emblems., and the designs may have represented a particular family or clan.

2. DOGŪ FIGURINE, Unglazed earthenware
Late Jōmon period (1000-300 B.C.)
H: 2 7/8 in. W: 3 7/8 in. D: 1 1/8 in. B69 S31

The same low-fired clay shown in the previous slide was also used for sculpture as well as pots. Many small figurines like this have been found in village sites of ancient Japan. Early dogu figures were small with a minimum of definition. Later figurines, such as this one, became larger with characteristic goggle eyes, short limbs, and decorated bodies. These figures are very mysterious; we don't know exactly what they represent, but they may have been used in fertility or healing rituals. Most of them seem to be female figures, some apparently pregnant. They are almost always found intentionally broken and discarded in pits, a practice found among many primitive cultures. Some are found under stone slabs or within a house isolated from the rest.

3. STORAGE JAR, Earthenware
Late Yayoi period (2nd-3rd century A.D.)
H: 19 1/8 in. D: 15 in. B60 P134+

The rounded, swelling form of this pot, its light color, and its smooth, faintly decorated surface is very different from the Jōmon pot. It was made by a potter of the succeeding Yayoi period (ca.300 B.C.-ca. A.D 300). New people had arrived in Japan, perhaps from South China or Southeast Asia. They brought with them the knowledge and seeds of rice culture. Yayoi communities sat in the middle of flooded lowland fields of rice. Large quantities of rice were harvested at one time, so large containers were needed to store the food until the next crop was ripe. Therefore, pottery production shifted from making predominantly cooking vessels to practical storage jars such as this one. Pottery was probably produced seasonally during periods requiring less labor in the fields.

Yayoi pots were also made by the coil method but were smoothed with the help of a slowly turning wheel. Fine horizontal designs which characterize pots of this period are easily created as the pot turns. The fine designs of Yayoi pots compared with the tactile quality of Jōmon pots demonstrates a difference between finishing using the slow wheel and hand building. The buff clay was fired in an open pit with lots of oxygen producing a lighter color. Occasional spots of gray or black clay appear where the fire had been particularly smokey.

4. JAR AND STAND, Earthenware, *Haji* ware
Kofun period (4th-5th century A.D.)
Jar: H: 5 7/8 in. D: 5 1/2 in.
Stand: H: 5 1/8 in. D: 6 7/8 in.
B 62 P3+ and P4+

Thin-walled, elegantly shaped pots like this round bottomed jar with its tall stand were used as offering dishes in religious ceremonies. Sake (rice wine) and food were often offered to the gods during burial rites within the tombs. Dishes on stands like this have been found in some tombs with the remains of food still in them. Red clay slip (fine clay mixed with water) painted over the buff, sandy clay gives the pot a smooth, glowing surface.

Haji ware is sometimes difficult to distinguish from earlier Yayoi pots as it is also low-fired earthenware formed by the coil method. But *haji* ware is usually made from clay of a finer consistency and then beaten and scraped to produce very thin walled pots which make more efficient use of fuel during cooking.

5. PAIR OF FEMALE *HANIWA*, Earthenware
Late Kofun period (ca. 6th century A.D.)
Left: H: 24 in. W: 7 7/8 in.; Right: H: 23 5/8 in. W: 6 1/2 in.
B60 S164+ and S165+

Haniwa means "cylinder." Plain *haniwa* cylinders were placed around the perimeter of burial mounds for powerful clan leaders. They functioned to mark the inner boundary of the sacred site and were used for offerings to the spirits. By the 3rd and 4th centuries, the *haniwa* evolved decorative tops in the form of houses to be placed directly over the remains. Later *haniwa* showed concern for status and protection by including replicas of weapons and symbolic regalia as families wanted to demonstrate their power and prestige in a growing hierarchical society. Only towards the end of the tumulus period do figural *haniwa* appear. Shamanesses, armed warriors, and horses in full trappings reflect the growing dominance of the equestrian culture.

Hundreds or even thousands of *haniwa* were needed for the tomb of a powerful emperor; therefore, they needed to be made quickly at a nearby kiln. The cylinder and figure were formed by coiling. Small arms were made separately and attached at the shoulder while facial features were cut out of the clay. *Haniwa* were meant to be viewed from a distance, across a moat, so the dark, cut-out eyes and simple features only suggest different expressions and personalities.

Variations of the decorative tops were based on local preferences, but the cylinder base remained constant. The figures in this slide represent female shamans, or priestesses of the ancient Japanese religion. They wear *magatama*, comma-shaped jewels around their necks. These symbolic and potent charms were made from a variety of stones and (rarely) glass. The shamans also carry round mirrors on their belts, and the figure on the left holds a cup of sake in her tiny arm. The painted lines on their faces were probably designed to dispel evil spirits. Notice the three pairs of holes in the sides of these figurines. Their purpose is unclear, but they may have been created to insert poles through the haniwa to allow them to be carried.

6. JAR ON HIGH FOOT WITH FOUR SMALL JARS
Stoneware with natural ash glaze, *Sue* ware
Kofun period (ca. 6th century A.D.)
H: 18 in. W: 11 in. B60 P537

A new kind of pottery was found inside the tomb mounds of the Kofun period (A.D. 300 to ca. 750). This tall jar, about 18 inches high, was used for a ceremony in the tomb at the time of burial and left perhaps for use of the spirit in the afterlife. The dense, hard, gray ware is called *sue* ware from the word *sueru* meaning "to offer." Many kinds of *sue* ware pots were used for rituals. This one is fitted with extra cups on the shoulder of the jar and decorated with small animal heads between them.

By the Kofun period the power of some regional rulers was much greater than others and small kingdoms had begun to be formed. Contact was made with the countries of Korea with the result that Japan began to learn and borrow ideas and more advanced technology from the cultures of mainland Asia. Korean potters brought *sue* ware to Japan. It is stoneware, made from a different kind of clay, that can be fired to a high temperature (usually 1100-1300° C) becoming harder and denser than earthenware pots. The resulting *sue* ware pot had the advantage of being less porous, allowing it to be used for storing liquids. *Sue* ware was also used for serving food but the high-fired clay could not be used for cooking as reheating would cause it to break.

These pots were fired in enclosed tunnel kilns. The gray color was created by an intentionally smokey fire, in a process called reduction firing (reduced oxygen in the kiln). Korean potters also brought knowledge of the fast-turning potter's wheel, allowing pots to be quickly formed from a lump of clay. This pot is made from several parts which were thrown separately and then joined together using slip.

7. BIRD-SHAPED BOTTLE, Stoneware, *Sue* ware
Late Kofun period (late 6th-early 7th century A.D.)
H: 5 1/8 in. L: 12 1/4 in. B69 P35

This is another piece of *sue* ware. It is a pouring vessel made to hold and serve water or perhaps rice wine on ritual occasions. Its shape suggests a duck, gliding on the water. The body was thrown as a shallow bowl and then two sides were flopped over and joined. One end was pinched together to make the tail and the other curved up and left open where another, smaller, wheel-thrown piece was added to form the neck or pouring spout.

Once the technique is mastered, it is much faster and easier to throw pots on the wheel than to make them by hand. These Korean and Japanese potters figured out how to combine small wheel-thrown elements to make large or interestingly shaped pots.

8. LONG-NECKED BOTTLE
Stoneware with natural ash glaze, *Sue* ware
Early Nara period (ca. 7th century A.D.)
H: 11 1/4 in. W: 7 7/8 in. B60 P526

Sue ware continued into the early Nara and Heian periods of Japanese history. Potters continued to throw small pots and pieces which they joined to make larger vessels. This bottle is made from two separate pieces. Look at the direction of the circular grooves made in the throwing process. Notice that the grooves run vertically, not horizontally as you might expect. This piece was made by first throwing a barrel-shaped form on the wheel. The opening at the top of the barrel was sealed with a pancake of clay. Then the piece was placed on its side (hence, the vertical grooves), and a hole was cut to attach the separately thrown neck .

Potters worked to refine the process; they cleaned the clay, built better kilns for more even firing, and began to appreciate the accidental glazing effects caused by the wood ash falling on the pots.

Glaze formed on the pots which were close to the fire and the blowing ashes. The ash fused with the molten feldspar in the clay forming a natural glaze. Here a large area of thick, glassy-green glaze has formed on much of the body and neck of the bottle. The green color is produced by iron in a reduction atmosphere (iron oxide in an oxidation firing would produce a yellowish-brown glaze). Inspired by this accidental glazing and the glazed ceramics being imported from China and Korea, potters began to try to figure out how to make glaze intentionally.

9. FLAT PITCHER WITH HANDLE
Stoneware with ash glaze, Sanage kilns
Heian period (ca. A.D. 800-850)
H: 3 1/4 in. D: 5 1/4 in. B87 P2

This pitcher has a crisp architectural quality which can be found in several of the ceramic shapes of the Heian period. Notice the clearly defined foot, the sharp angle where the short, flared body joins the almost level shoulder, the flat strap handle, and the way the spout joins the body at an acute angle.

Not only does this pouring vessel reflect careful planning and precise potting in its form but it also shows the new skill of intentional glazing. Unfortunately, because the pot was buried in the ground for a long time the glaze has flaked off in places and discolored in others. The glaze has not been applied evenly all over--some areas were left unglazed.

Sanage kilns inherited *sue* ware production and experimented to improve the ware, making it lighter in color and creating intentional glazes. This ware was called white ware (*shirashi*) because the pale clay body. Steeper tunnel kilns created more draft, so more oxygen was pulled in than in typical *sue* reduction firings. There was, however, enough reduction to turn the iron in the glaze a pale green.

10. KO-SETO BOTTLE, Glazed stoneware, Seto kilns
Kamakura period (early 14th century A.D.)
H: 10 5/8 in. D: 6 5/8 in. 1991.6

This bottle shows Chinese influence in its glaze, design, and shape. At the request of the imperial court and other patrons, the Japanese potters had been trying to copy the green-glazed celadon wares that were being imported from China and Korea since the 8th century. The first successful attempts were the ash-glazed wares from the Sanage kilns, which in turn spurred the improved glazes at Seto.

By the 14th century, Seto potters had mastered the technology and were able to produce an even, all-over transparent glaze which was thick enough not to run during the firing. The Japanese call this olive green color "old leaf color." It is browner than the gray green of Chinese celadons which they were trying to copy because there was more oxygen in the kiln atmosphere.

As on many Chinese celadons, decorative patterns were carved into the clay body before glazing. The glaze in the grooves of the design is thicker and therefore darker, making the design show up clearly. In this example, the technique may be Chinese, but the bold, freely drawn leaf decoration is purely Japanese.

In China, this bottle shape with its tapered body, high shoulder and narrow mouth is called *meiping* or plum blossom shape because it was meant to hold a single branch of blooming plum in the spring. In Japan this bottle shape was used to store and serve liquids, especially sake for ritual occasions.

11. STORAGE JAR, Stoneware with natural ash glaze, Shigaraki kilns
Muromachi period (ca. 15th century A.D.)
H: 21 1/4 in. W: 18 7/8 in. B66 P38

This is a very large jar, almost two feet tall. Food storage jars like this were made in regional kilns for use by the common people. The narrow bottoms of the jars were partially buried in the packed earth floor and the food was ladled out as needed.

For jars this big, often two or three potters would work together turning the wheel, placing thick coils of clay around the rim and paddling and smoothing the coils into shape. This pot was made in several stages, allowing the clay of each layer to become firm before the next was added because the heavy clay would slump if the pot had been made all at once. Notice the bulges where new coils were added when the pot below was dry and firm enough to hold the extra weight.

Shigaraki clay was very coarse, containing small stones and lumps of feldspar. These stones caused cracking of the clay around them; some stones fell out leaving pits in the surface. The lumps of feldspar partially melted to a white glassy consistency. The sand and gravel at the surface were scraped along as the pot was turned and smoothed, leaving horizontal lines of varying depth and length. The potters did not purposely glaze their pots, but sometimes natural ash glazing occurred in the kiln. Frequently undecorated, there are sometimes incised x's and lines on the shoulder and potters' marks on some pieces.

At the time these pots were made perhaps nobody paid any attention to these pits, bumps, and scratches or the splotches of natural glaze. At a later time, however, when a ritualized manner of making and drinking tea became popular, some tea masters discovered the natural beauty of these pots.

12. TEA CEREMONY WATER JAR
Stoneware with natural ash glaze, Iga kilns
Edo period (ca. 17th century A.D.)
H: 7 3/4 in. D: 7 3/4 in. B68 P4

Some rough and irregular pots were the product of casual, unselfconscious potting and others like this were made irregular on purpose, just for the tea ceremony. Along with the art of tea drinking which entered Japan from China, came the kinds of pottery used to store, make, and drink the tea. Ceramic tea items include the tea container, tea bowl (not cup), fresh water jar, sometimes a waste water container, and lid rest. Additional dishes may include food plates, a vase for flowers, or an incense container. This pot was made for holding fresh, cold water which would be ladled into the iron tea kettle which sat over a brazier containing the charcoal fire. Whereas tea was originally made in the kitchen then brought out to serve the guests, tea masters began to set out the paraphernalia for tea and make it in front of their guests.

To produce this jar, the potter first made a perfectly round, symmetrical pot on the wheel with a pinched waist and narrower top portion and then, when it was not quite dry (a stage called "leather hard"), he pushed, paddled, and poked it into its own unique shape or personality. The glazing was also deliberately free and irregular to encourage special "accidental" effects in the kiln. These individual pots were like individual people. Many were even named. They were treasured as they were passed down from one tea master to the next.

13. STORAGE JAR, Stoneware, Suzu kiln
Kamakura period (late 13th-mid 14th century A.D.)
H: 14 1/2 in. D: 12 1/2 in. 1990.199

In another part of Japan, on the north coast of the main island of Honshu, high-fired pots in the tradition of *sue* wares continued to be made. They are gray, dense stoneware pots which exploit the

markings left by paddling of the form into a decorative herringbone design. Jars such as this were used to store grains, seed, water, or such.

This pot, like that from the Shigaraki kiln (slide 11), was made by the coil method and then paddled into shape. The carved wooden paddle left a design of short striations, making a loose herringbone pattern in vertical rows on the body and a more flowing circular pattern on the shoulders.

14. TEA-LEAF STORAGE JAR, Unglazed stoneware, Bizen kilns
Momoyama period (early 17th century A.D.)
H: 10 3/4 in. D: 9 1/4 in. B67 P10

Another kiln of the medieval period was at Bizen, in Western Honshu, in the highlands above the Inland Sea. During the late 16th and early 17th centuries, regional kilns developed in many parts of Japan. Bizen production was organized into three large community kilns with potters apparently marking their own pots and those ordered by special customers. Bizen potters produced everyday wares for the region from a dark, iron-rich clay. This clay is also very dense and hard, producing non-porous waterproof pots at stoneware temperatures. When glazed, it was with a thin, transparent glaze or accidental ash-glaze, often leaving a mustard color on the shoulders and body of the piece. Oxidized iron creates the warm red tones of this pot.

The design of red lines, called "cross-fire," was left by wet straw placed between the pots to keep them from sticking to each other during the firing. The random decorative designs were greatly admired.

The jar was made to hold tea leaves. A lid was tied in place by means of the loops, or lugs on the shoulder.

15. POWDERED TEA CONTAINER (*CHAIRE*)
Stoneware with iron glaze, Mino kilns
Momoyama period (late 16th-early 17th century A.D.)
H: 2 1/8 in. D: 2 1/4 in. B85 P11

This is a very tiny jar, only about 2 inches tall. It was used to hold the finely powdered tea used in the tea ceremony. This kind of tea was made like hot chocolate in that the powder was placed in a bowl, hot water added, and the mixture beaten to a froth with a bamboo whisk.

The rich brownish-black glaze on this jar is borrowed from another ware imported from China to Japan. The luscious dark glaze from the kilns of southern China were used in the Chan Buddhist temples of Tianmu on the eastern coast of China. They were brought back by monks and merchants travelling to the area since the 18th century. Called *temmoku* in Japanese, this glaze was used on tea bowls, tea caddies, and tea leaf storage jars. Its dark glaze is produced by ash glaze colored with concentrated iron-bearing clay.

These small jars were originally used as spice containers by the Chinese and were imported to Japan during the 13th century. Those adopted or replicated for use in the tea ceremony were fitted with ivory lids. Jars were ranked on the basis of quality and given special names and protective decorative fabric bags. Exceptional pieces were worth as much as a small feifdom and given as rewards to samurai.

16. MUKŌZUKE DISH, Stoneware with underglaze iron
E-Shino ware, Mino kilns
Momoyama period (late 16th century A.D.)
H: 1 7/8 in. W: 6 5/8 in. B69 P1

By the late 16th century, glazing techniques and styles had expanded considerably. Potters had experimented and learned to formulate the glaze with more felspathic clay in proportion to ash. This milky glaze is made with a local feldspar. It is thick and bubbly,

both exposing and hiding the decoration painted in iron oxide beneath. The design is loosely painted in a free and spontaneous manner balancing naturalism and abstraction in the three stalks of bamboo grass or flowers and the simple border design. Similar dishes might be made but no two were exactly alike. The Japanese genius for design and pattern which was already well developed in other decorative arts during the Heian period was now being translated to this new medium.

Following the preferences of tea taste, this dish is slightly irregular in shape. Starting with a wheel-thrown shallow bowl, the sides of the dish were bent up and shaped into a nearly square form. The rim has been curled inward and flattened on top. Three small loop legs elevate the dish. The individual quality of the shape and decoration was greatly admired and sought after. The artistic and technological achievements of the Japanese potter blossomed with astonishing virtuosity in the production of Shino wares.

17. MUKŌZUKE DISH
Stoneware with incised design in iron slip under milky glaze,
Gray Shino ware, Mino kilns
Momoyama period (A.D. 1573-1615)
H: 2 3/8 in. W: 6 3/8 in. B69 P2

The tea ceremony consisted of a small meal and the ritualistic making and drinking of the frothy, powdered tea. Dishes of various kinds and sizes were sought after for the meal (*kaiseki*) service as well as for the making of the tea itself.

This gray-blue dish is another example from the same group of kilns as the last slide. It uses the same thick, white, bubbly glaze, but here the whole dish was covered first with black iron oxide. The design was then carved into this coating to expose the light pottery beneath. The white glaze over all created a decoration of white designs in reserve against a textured gray ground. The soft, thick glaze makes these dishes very pleasing to hold.

From the mid-15th century to the end of the 16th, a new class of prosperous merchants had emerged. Agricultural improvements of the previous period had stimulated commerce and the spreading of wealth. The new stability made it possible for the wealthy merchants, who were aficionados of the tea ceremony, to indulge their interests and order ceramics. Production increased and potters devised new ways of manufacture to meet the demand. This dish, for example, was made in a mold, a method which allowed sets of dishes to be more readily produced. However, each piece still had a unique quality created by hand decorating.

18. SQUARE DISH, INCENSE CONTAINER, DISH WITH HANDLE
Stoneware with glaze, Ao-Oribe ware and E-Oribe ware,
Mino kilns, Momoyama period (A.D. 1573-1615)
(L to R) H: 2 1/4 in. W: 7 1/2 in. B67 P8
H: 1 3/4 in. D: 2 in. B74 P4;
H: 5 7/8 in. W: 8 7/8 in. B64 P34;

Here are two rectangular serving dishes and a small incense box of Oribe ware, all made at the Mino kilns. These wares are named for the tea master Furuta Oribe, who preferred tea wares with bold decorative designs.

Ao(green)-oribe has large areas of rich, dark, copper-green glaze contrasting with areas of clear glaze over iron oxide decoration on the buff clay body. Contrasts in tone and surprising juxtapositions of design elements characterize this ware.

The shapes are also strongly decorative and many are angular, such as square and fan shaped dishes. They were made of rolled and cut clay slab pieces fitted together in a mold. Thin, gauze-like cloth was used between the mold and the clay to separate them. It has left textile imprinting on the bottom and some edges of the dishes.

The small incense box is very subtle compared to the green oribe dishes. There is a soft pink background, made by the addition of a little iron to the clay body. Flowers and circles are outlined with

iron oxide and filled in with white slip. During the tea ceremony, a few pieces of incense were added to the charcoal brazier, its fragrance contributing to the quiet atmosphere of the tea ceremony.

19. MUKŌZUKE DISH, Stoneware with underglaze iron,
E-Karatsu ware, Karatsu kilns
Momoyama-Edo period (early 17th century)
H: 3 3/4 in. W: 3 1/2 in. B74 P7

At the end of the 16th century, Hideyoshi, the ruling general who had helped unify the country after many years of warfare, took his army across the Sea of Japan to try to conquer Korea. When he returned he brought back many Korean potters. Since the 16th century, Japanese tea practitioners had been fond of certain Korean ceramics for tea wares, so now some of these potters settled in northern Kyushu and introduced Korean pottery techniques to that region. One ware was called E(painted)-Karatsu. Many shapes were made in the Karatsu kilns from large platters to jars, bowls, and small cups.

This smallish cup-like dish was made not for liquids but rather to hold a small helping of chopped vegetable for the kaiseki meal. The cup was thrown with a small waist-like indentation mid way. When leather hard, it was squeezed into its square form. Iron oxide painting of birds and plants was a favorite design on E-Karatsu dishes. Similarities to designs produced in the Mino kilns were to be expected as there was a lively sharing of technical and stylistic ideas between the two areas. In fact, it was probably these kilns that introduced the *noborigama* kiln type to the Mino area.

20. BLACK RAKU TEA BOWL, Earthenware with glaze
Edo period, Kyoto kilns
Attributed to Raku Sōnyū (A.D. 1664-1716)
H: 2 3/16 in. W: 5 1/2 in.
B76 P5

Of all the tea ceremony dishes the tea bowl was the most central and so the most important. It was the focus of the actual ceremony and the container handled by host and guest. How the tea is made in it, how it is picked up, turned, admired, and drunk from were all carefully codified. Tea bowls are so special they were often given their own names by their owners.

Raku tea bowls were particularly admired because their soft, porous, low-fired clay, and thick unguent glazes held heat well and felt good in the hands. An early 16th century tea master, Sen no Rikyū, was responsible for cultivating the simple, natural tea taste that respected traditional wares of regional potteries. He urged his friend, Raku Chōjirō, a tile maker by profession, to make him a tea bowl, thus beginning the production of Raku wares.

This bowl has a comfortable, thick, pitted, black glaze. The straight sides and flat bottom, small circular foot are all characteristic of these tea bowls.